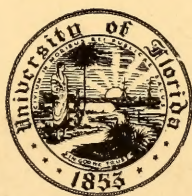
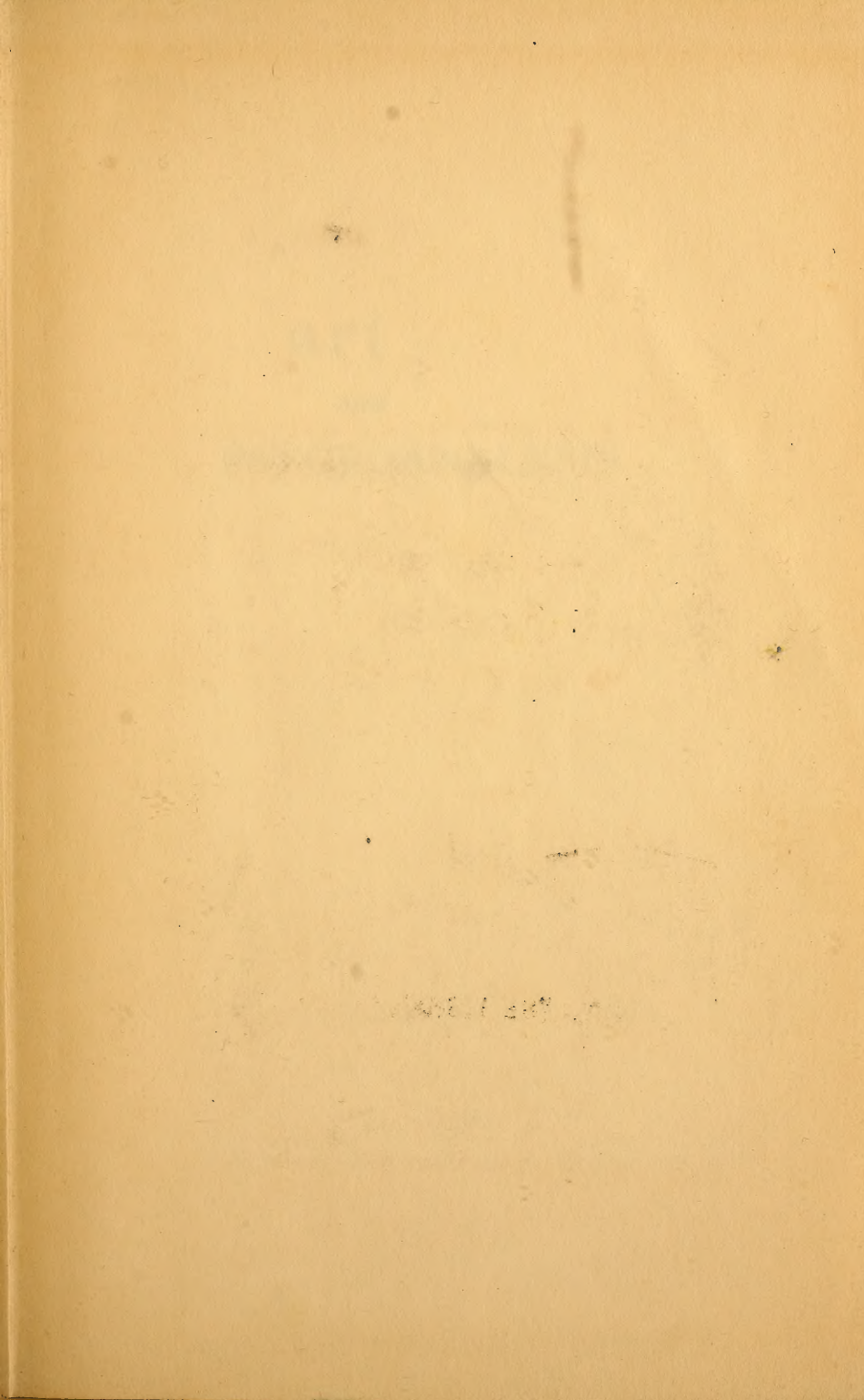
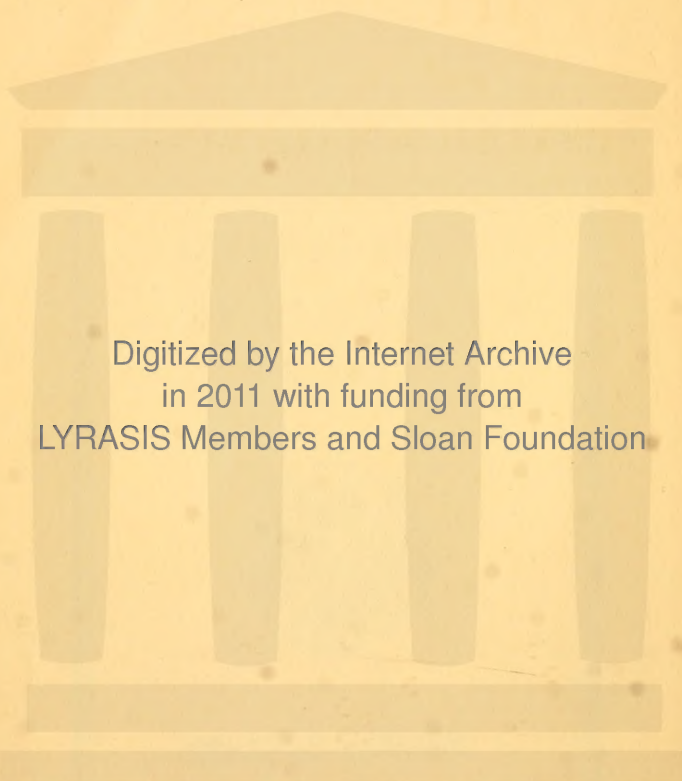


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Edited, with an introduction
by **WILLIAM PHILLIPS**

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General

Preface

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THE LITERATURE relating to art and psychoanalysis is enormous and scattered through countless technical and academic journals and specialized publications, many of which are now unavailable. One of the main purposes of this collection is to make accessible in one volume some of the outstanding contributions in this field.

But, faced with so many possible choices, what was the principle of selection? Why this piece, it might be asked, and not that one? The selection, like most others, was based not on a single but on many criteria. In some cases merit was the yardstick; in others historical interest. Some pieces were chosen as representing a special approach; others as the work of an important figure. Most of the contributions are by practicing analysts, but there are also some by well-known writers. They fall into three general categories: studies of single works of art or creative artists, theoretical essays, and literary pieces.

A number of papers that bear on the subject, such as Meyer Schapiro's brilliant essay on Leonardo, have not been included for reasons that have nothing to do with their quality. Some papers

were too long, permission for others could not be obtained. Ernest Jones's famous work on *Hamlet*, on the other hand, is already available as a paperback. Almost all the pieces included are about literature, as the studies in the other arts are much inferior—perhaps because ideology is more easily assimilated than form into psychoanalysis.

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Introduction: Art and Neurosis

ALMOST FROM the beginning, our culture has had a double image of the creative man: he was believed to be obsessed, perhaps even mad, yet at the same time he was thought to have some extraordinary gift of insight, some great wisdom not shared by ordinary people. This apparent contradiction has never been resolved; sometimes it was the normality of the artist that was emphasized, while at other times his prophetic powers were stressed, though usually the question was solved by ignoring it. With the development of psychoanalysis, the problem has taken on a new cast. At first, it was simply assumed that art is in some manner connected with neurosis, though there was disagreement about whether art expresses neurosis or the catharsis of the neurosis. More recently, however, the trend has been mostly the other way, to dissociate the work of art from the neurosis of the author, and to regard it as a "normal" achievement, a triumph of health over sickness.

This more wholesome view of the creative process is often put forward in the language of psychoanalysis, but it also obviously reflects the need for personal tranquillity and social adjustment that dominates the mood of the present. For one thing, the dis-

covery that neurosis is curable, putting it within the domain of health and hygiene, was bound to make creative aberration less palatable. Even more important, the association of psychological disorder with the estrangement of the modern artist—as in the cult of the unique, from Rimbaud to Dylan Thomas—has made it difficult to distinguish the neurotic from the anarchic personality. Though it is still not clear whether the Bohemian dedication to depravity simply releases neurosis, or is tied up with it, we think of the two as belonging together. Hence our feelings about the relation of neurosis and creativity are likely to be colored by our views on the social position of the artist; and in a period of respectability and cultural timidity it is not surprising that abnormality and unconventionality are often confused, and both frowned upon.

When we speak of the artist as “mad” or “neurotic” the terms do not simply refer to the state of his mental health; they give a mythic picture of the creative man: inspired, rebellious, dedicated, obsessive, and alienated, as well as neurotic; and they also suggest the evil and irrational underworld of experience dredged up by the modern writer. Thomas Mann’s celebration, for example, of the role of disease in the making of art stems from a sense of the moral and psychological ambiguities in any work of art as well as in the life of the artist, and from Mann’s belief that the artist has been chosen to enrich the imagination of the community though he is in some ways outside its pale. On the other hand, many recent demands for normality have questioned the need for anything against the grain, irresponsible, or offbeat in art. The fact is that the work of writers like Gide or Joyce represents a different kind of experience from that of the common run of fiction; and it is this experience, rather than the neurosis of the author, that is rejected in the name of normality, which is taken to be synonymous with whatever is conventional and popular.

Perhaps it is because philistinism has been associated with health, in our culture, that many of us prefer to make some connection, however loose, between art and neurosis, though there is still very little evidence of a scientific nature to support such a view. It is true that most advanced art, at least in our time, seems to have thrived in an atmosphere of abnormality, and that the

lives of most creative figures read like case histories. But, as Lionel Trilling has pointed out in a remarkably cogent essay, there is no reason to believe that neurosis itself is the creative force. There is also the question of the work: is it neurotic or not?—and if not, what does it mean to say that the artist is a neurotic? Even if neurosis is shown to have something to do with art, we still have to ask whether all neuroses are related to all art or whether only some kinds of art are traceable to certain neuroses, and whether the neurosis of the artist produces, conditions, or is transmuted or sublimated into art. To put the question in a more general way, what we need to know is how the neurosis of the artist, which is a form of disorder, can shape a work of art that has value and meaning for an entire civilization. Thus we are really questioning what was once assumed: that madness and wisdom may go hand in hand.

One reason we know so little about the relation of neurosis to art is that we know so little about art. It might have been expected that psychoanalysis would have clarified some of these questions; and actually it has thrown some light on one side of the problem, by defining the neurotic mechanism and by giving an exact account of the neurosis of many writers, painters, musicians. But, despite the vast number of studies on the subject by psychoanalysts, we still have no answer to some of the basic questions. Much of the writing on art by psychoanalysts combines bad taste—as when *Death of a Salesman* is treated as a classic—with some contrived, jargonized theory. The approach to painting and music,¹ based largely on a “literary” version of content, has been most primitive, and its value has been biographical rather than aesthetic. But even the best of psychoanalytic writing in this vein suffers from the lack of an accepted philosophy of art; hence it has had either to adopt or improvise one. Some analysts have taken art to be a form of communication, others a mode of expression, and the traditional definitions of meaning, form, content, and audience have all found their way into psychoanalytic writing. Most aesthetic systems in the past have been no better than the insight that went into their formulation, and when they simply are tacked on to some doctrine in another field, like psychoanalysis,

the result is at best a tour de force. Even so brilliant an essay as Ernest Jones's famous study of *Hamlet*, which traces the Oedipal motives in the play, makes the assumption that works of art are great and lasting when, like *Hamlet*, they deal with primal conflicts. Such an assumption is, of course, too simple and schematic, and though Jones's piece does enlarge our understanding of the play, it is not, in itself, a first-rate example of literary criticism or of aesthetics.

Freud's few attempts to explain the nature of art are not very impressive, though, of course, Freud himself—like most outstanding thinkers—was superior not only to his followers, but often to his own theories. Perhaps the least impressive of Freud's observations was that it was the desire for fame, power, and the love of women that lay behind the creative will of the writer. Nor do I find a satisfactory explanation of the creative act in the analogies to daydreaming and fantasy building noted by Freud. As for the *origin* of the creative gift, Freud insisted on many occasions that psychoanalysis had no special explanation for this mysterious force, though the concept of sublimation would suggest that all the achievements of civilization come from the taming of the id. Freud's contribution to the problem of art lies mainly, I think, in the examples he set in his profound essays on such figures as Dostoevsky and Leonardo, where he made a number of interesting correlations between the neurotic pattern of these artists' lives and the content of their works, touching on the meaning of those correlations in a purely speculative and tentative manner.

Any total approach to art that sees the creative gift or process as a form of neurosis is bound to produce a lopsided and absurd theory. If art is considered as a form of sublimation, or a variety of dream or fantasy, or even as a therapeutic activity, then we have no criteria for judging it, nor any way of distinguishing it from other kinds of dream or fantasy, or therapy. And as for the many ingenious exercises, revealing art to be oral or anal, sadistic or masochistic, narcissist, totemic, the best that can be said of them is that they apply equally well to a doodle, a Grandma Moses, or a Jackson Pollock, though, of course, they cover more of the doodle. Nor can we attribute the power or significance of a work

of art to the neurosis of the author, for then we would have to assume that its meaning lay wholly in its psychological content, which corresponded not only to the neuroses of the author, but to those of the audience as well. Such a novel as *The Possessed* would have to be read merely as a story of the criminal mind, and we could not account for its stature as a political novel.

It seems meaningless to speak of *neurotic* art, except in referring to the exercises of mental patients, which might yield something neurotic—or psychotic²—but not art. On the other hand, it is equally meaningless to speak of a *healthy* art or of the creative act as a triumph of health over illness, since the term healthy can only be pejorative: it does not describe a specific form or content. If all we mean by a triumph of such health is that instead of collapsing a writer produced a poem or story, then this is only another way of saying that his neurosis did not completely paralyze him. To characterize, for example, Rilke's spurts of productivity, in between long fallow periods, as signs of health is simply to juggle the word so as to define writing as healthy. One might just as well call it neurotic, since the process of composition was obsessive and dreamlike. Certainly the creative act often resembles compulsive fits and states of hallucination, and all we gain by calling it healthy rather than neurotic is the reassurance of knowing that we are not reveling in disease.

In what sense, then, does neurosis have something to do with art? To begin with, there is the fact that many, if not most, writers, painters, and musicians in the modern period have been neurotic. It is true, of course, that people who are not creative may also be neurotic; hence the popular belief that the connection between art and neurosis has been much exaggerated. Perhaps the only way to settle this question in a seemingly scientific way would be to tabulate neuroses to determine whether creative people suffer more than others, and whether their neuroses are different in kind or degree. In a time when every conceivable question has become the subject of a poll, it is surprising that no statistical study of neurosis ever has been attempted. But even if such a study showed, as I suspect it would, that creative people are distinguished not by their neurosis but by their creations, it still might be true that neurosis, though not *sufficient* for the production of art, may be

necessary for it. Recently a study of a German writer and thinker appeared under the title, *The Mind of a Genius*. Though it was obviously not its intent, what struck one most about the book was the fact that the subject's genius lay not in his achievement but in his personality and intellectual habits, which combined boldness and originality with eccentricity. Somewhere in his make-up was an essential flaw, perhaps in his intelligence, but he had what might be called a neurotic predisposition toward ideas.

Strictly speaking, a neurosis is an insoluble conflict within the unconscious that may lead to aberration in one's behavior or state of mind. In this technical sense, neurosis would be pertinent to art only if we thought of art itself as an aberration or sublimation. But using the term more loosely, in neurosis, and psychosis, there is often a distortion of experience, so that certain human events and relations are given an undue—sometimes obsessive—emphasis. In someone who is not creative, a distorted view of reality is part of his illness and inability to adjust, and may be of no intellectual interest: indeed, the paranoia of a trivial mind is incredibly boring. In someone like Kafka, however, the paranoid twist in both the life and the writing was coupled with a gift of a high order and a mind capable of original and striking observations. The same was true in D. H. Lawrence, whose sexual dreams would have had only a clinical interest without his intellectual powers.

Now much modern writing is centered in some obsessive theme or some biased image of human affairs, growing out of the fixations of the author. Take even so constructed a work as *The Waste Land*, whose meanings would seem to be mainly cultural and religious. But what Eliot is concerned with, in our culture and religion as well as in our personal lives, is the breakdown of identity, and the image of breakdown is provided by the sexual ambiguity of Tiresias,³ which I take to be the psychological core of the poem. The homosexual theme crops up constantly, usually in an explicit way, but I think it is also expressed symbolically in the perversion of feelings and the spiritual impotence running through *The Waste Land*. One would have to know more about Eliot's private preoccupations to speculate further about the effect of his neurosis on his entire vision, but I think it is reasonable to

assume that this vision reflects the more personal elements in his writing.

This is not to say that *The Waste Land* is a neurotic poem, any more than, say, *Gulliver's Travels* or even *The Trial* are neurotic works, though Swift and Kafka were known to be mentally disturbed to the point of partial breakdown and inability to function in crucial areas of their lives. What then does it mean to say that Swift's or Kafka's writings contained some central distortion of experience traceable to the neuroses of the authors? The answer, I think, is that their neurotic impressions of the world coincided with impressions that were not neurotic and served to organize and energize the latter. In the case of Kafka, the paranoia, for example, that colored his personal and sexual relations became in his fiction a kind of psychological focus for a world in which the characters are the victims of organized ignorance and authority; and the living Kafka's search for his psychic identity becomes in his writing a search for a religious and metaphysical identity. The work of neurotic writers can be characterized as neurotic only by reducing its total meaning to its seemingly neurotic components—which, in turn, are assumed to be identical with the neurosis of the author. Thus Kafka's novels can be considered neurotic only if we interpret them, as some analysts and critics actually have done, as fictionalized projections of Kafka's own derangements.

Now we come to another paradox: for the unique combination of neurotic experience with some apparently objective or plausible view of the world, such as we find in writers like Kafka or Eliot, seems to be characteristic of much modern literature. Indeed, it is this combination that we designate as the *modern experience*, and this experience, though seemingly shared by a sufficient number of readers and writers to make up a tradition, has at the same time certain affinities with neurotic experience. Such themes as loneliness, self-doubt, hypersensitivity, loss of identity, estrangement from the community—all have their counterparts among the common neuroses; and the two modes of experience, normal and abnormal, often have been joined in such a way that it becomes meaningless to distinguish between them. How can we set Swift's

neurotic misanthropy apart from the powerful satire of his writings, which, ironically enough, are assigned to school children for didactic as well as literary reasons? If Gide's homosexuality was a "sickness," what shall we call the moral implications of his concern with the truth of one's own being? Is *Death in Venice* a study of degeneration or a parable of a modern writer? In each case I suppose we would have to say the content was both normal and abnormal, but that is the same as saying it is neither; or perhaps, to put it more precisely, there has been in each case a conjunction of neurotic experience with experience that we assume to be normal—by which we apparently mean an experience shared by a sufficient number of cultivated people to make it seem objective, general, and typical.

If some such combination of the objective and neurotic is characteristic of modern writing, we can only speculate about the way they have been brought together. It has been suggested at various times, particularly when our political morale has been low, that our civilization is neurotic; this would, of course, make it unnecessary to explain any single neurotic strain in our art or culture. I suspect that describing an entire culture as neurotic is nothing more than a juggling of terms to make all art—what about our philosophy and our science?—neurotic by definition. If our civilization is neurotic, then everything and everyone is neurotic, and we have no way of judging it or knowing whether a re-creation of it is distorted or not. The collectivization of neurosis transforms the neurotic artist into a psychological conformist.

One simple explanation of the way neuroses legitimately find their way into any of the arts would be that the writer's world has been created mainly by his intelligence acting on what he has inherited from his culture, and that his neuroses are then brought into play as he personalizes his experience. Another might be that only writers endowed with certain kinds of neuroses, along with their imaginative gifts, can thrive, in the Darwinian sense, at any given time. Someone like Hemingway, who has put his adolescent ideas to literary use, might not have been so successful in a classical period that put a premium on intellectual order and maturity. Or, perhaps, a process of natural selection takes place even earlier, before creation begins, and only certain kinds of neurotics are

able to make the break with the community necessary to enter the unstable world of the arts. Surely, there must be some significance in the large number of homosexuals peopling the intellectual and artistic professions, especially the dance and the theater, today. We know that the faculty we call talent is not sufficient to produce "art": thousands of people have enough verbal and narrative skill to write and even to find a market. Our idea of art embraces, in addition to control of the medium, a profound and arresting sense of the world, and it is conceivable that this power, though mainly intellectual, is enhanced by a disposition, which we would call neurotic, to reject conventional attitudes.

The question remains as to how a view of the world that has been warped, if only partially, by neurosis can be said to be truthful, objective, or morally stimulating. The question is bound up with many philosophical considerations, including the very nature of art and truth, that are themselves in dispute. But this much can be said: the idea that art is the dispenser of moral and philosophical truths is only a myth, though a prevailing one in our culture. Like most other myths, this one has great suggestive power, linking art to other pursuits that enlarge our vision and understanding, but it cannot be applied literally without falling into didacticism.

From the time of Plato and Aristotle there has been an almost constant pressure, from many different sources, to enlist the arts in the service of some higher aim or some larger truth. Rarely and only for short spells was it permissible for a novel, say, or a painting to steer clear of the claims of morality, politics, or religion; usually it was considered frivolous and irresponsible to think of the arts in their own terms. At first there was the messianism of Christianity, then the Protestant ethic, and more recently the growth of utilitarian ideals, the development of a social conscience, and the confusion of art with education in the spread of middle and high culture—all these forces have conspired to get us to believe that art is supposed to make us better and wiser. There may be some ambiguity about whether art is by nature concerned with truth and morality or whether that is its ideal purpose towards which it must strive at all times. In either case the effect is the same: art

has become an easy prey in our culture to all kinds of theories and causes that claim to have discovered some medical, moral, or historical truth.

Now part of the difficulty obviously comes from the fact that none of the arts is self-contained. Despite the efforts of many formalist critics to define a work of art as the sum of its textual or plastic qualities and to judge it mostly in technical terms, the fact is that art has always absorbed the moods and currents of the civilization that produced it. And though I do not want to go into esthetics at this point, I think it can be said that we regard a work of art as good or bad because of the way its formal qualities are combined with what we roughly call its vision, or its values, or its range of consciousness. But this is not at all the same thing as saying that literature, to take the art most filled with *content*, has a moral purpose, a position which has been quite fashionable ever since the idea of political responsibility was abandoned, or that it reflects or asserts something known as "truth," a point of view that has lately been gaining ground. Of course the notion of truth is an old naturalist slogan, but all it meant in that context was to promote the kind of fiction that represented the texture of average, daily plebeian existence, and insofar as naturalism contained any idea of truth or reality, it was that life is grimy and frustrated and full of social injustice. This was simply a literary movement riding the tail of a social movement.

The more recent turn toward the concept of truth in art is something else; it is actually a turn-against the idea of alienation, dissidence, and rebellion. For it ignores the question of values and tends to minimize the attitudes of commitment to new forces and rebellion against old ones that lie behind fresh creative movements and the audiences that support them. It seems meaningless to insist that a work of art conveys some lasting human truth: what is the "universal" truth in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Picasso's *Three Musicians* or one of Schoenberg's compositions? (Incidentally, the word "truth" is often only a synonym for verisimilitude or for insight into human behavior.) Aside from the mastery of the medium, we have, in modern art at least, not a permanent truth but a different accent or points of view that at best are true only for a small number of people and perhaps

only for a limited span. In our time many innovations have been carried by an *avant garde* concerned not with *the truth* but with some new, irreverent, often shocking stand against prevailing moods and opinions. And perhaps the decline of the *avant garde* has something to do with the high regard these days, not only for the notion of truth, but also for that of normality and respectability in the arts.

Just as other periods sometimes regarded the imagination as a wild, demonic force we now like to think of it as quite tame and orderly; and we tend to associate abnormality with literary postures and false ideas. But let us not be fooled into thinking these views are objective or that they help clarify the relations between art, truth, and morality. They are merely symptoms of the times; and their literary meaning lies mainly in the fact that they serve to promote one creative strain rather than another. Thus in recent years there has been a growing tendency to tear down the more obviously neurotic and alienated writers, the extremists, like Kafka, Proust, Joyce, even Dostoevsky, and to elevate such figures as Dickens, George Eliot, and Trollope who seemingly stand for a more orderly and "wholesome" kind of experience. No doubt the tension between these two traditions has played a large part in the literary life of the past century, and we have tended to associate greater abnormality with those whom Van Wyck Brooks once called "coterie" writers, largely as a symbol of a more radical break with existing norms. As Gide, who favored the wilder talents, put it: "There do exist geniuses, Victor Hugo for example, sane and whole. Their perfect spiritual poise precludes the possibility of any fresh problem. Rousseau without the leaven of madness, would, I am sure, be no better than an undigested Cicero. . . . The individual who is abnormal refuses to submit to laws already established." At the same time, we should note that the cleavage is not absolute. Someone like Mann, for example, was torn between the two traditions; and it is amusing to watch the efforts today to transform Whitman into a man of the main stream.

If, however, we investigate the life and work of the individual writer, the distinction between the normal and the abnormal in literature turns out to be largely programmatic rather than scientific. Henry James or T. S. Eliot, for example, who are usually

assumed to be on the side of order and classicism, may be just as neurotic—in their work as well as in their private lives—as Joyce or Kafka; and as for the question of truth, I see no way of deciding which one of them is closer to the “truth” in his writing. The national and personal ambiguities in the work of James, which were bound up in some way with the ambiguities of his own life, are just as true as, say, Joyce’s rejection, in the name of the uncompromising artist, of “my home, my fatherland, or my church,” which was also tied up with some neurotic need to dissociate himself from the conventional world.

The opposition between “truth” and “neurosis” is actually a clash of two myths, the myth of the artist as philosopher and moralist and the myth of the messianic madman. It is the traditional split, celebrated by Nietzsche, between the Apollonian and Dionysian view of art: between Apollo, the god of light, poetry, and prophecy, who stood for self-control, tranquillity, and radiance, and Dionysius, who represented frenzy, intoxication, and mystery, and brought art to the edge of barbarism and pathology. In our time, however, the distinction between the two is slowly disappearing, and—who knows?—maybe some day the neurotic artist will become a pillar of society.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

¹ Most of the examples I am using here are drawn from literature, because the formal content of painting and music has a much more complex and less obvious connection with psychological motives, and these media require special analysis. I do believe, however, that all of the arts, and creative thinking as well, have the same basic relation to neurosis.

² I have been using mainly the more common and less extreme term “neurotic,” but much of what I have been saying could apply to psychosis or psychotic tendencies.

³ Despite Eliot’s own note on the importance of Tiresias in the scheme of *The Waste Land*, most commentators have not given him more weight than any other element in the poem, perhaps because their methods precluded a psychological approach.

Part One

SIGMUND FREUD

Dostoevsky and Parricide

FOUR FACETS MAY be distinguished in the rich personality of Dostoevsky: the creative artist, the neurotic, the moralist, and the sinner. How is one to find one's way in this bewildering complexity?

The creative artist is the least doubtful; Dostoevsky's place is not far behind Shakespeare. *The Brothers Karamazov* is the most magnificent novel ever written; the episode of the Grand Inquisitor, one of the peaks in the literature of the world, can hardly be overpraised. Unfortunately, before the problem of the creative artist, analysis must lay down its arms.

The moralist in Dostoevsky is the most readily assailable. If we try to rank him high as a moralist on the plea that only a man who has gone through the depths of sin can reach the highest heights of morality, we are neglecting one consideration. A moral man is one who reacts to the temptation he feels in his heart without yielding to it. The man who alternately sins, and in his remorse makes high moral demands, lays himself open to the reproach that he has made things too easy for himself. He has not achieved the most important thing in morality, renunciation, for the moral conduct of life is a

practical human interest. He reminds one of the barbarians of the great migrations, who murder and do penance therefor, where penitence becomes a technique to enable murder to be done. Ivan the Terrible behaved in exactly this way—in fact, this compromise with morality is a characteristic Russian trait. Nor was the ultimate result of Dostoevsky's moral struggles anything very glorious. After the most violent battles to reconcile the impulsive claims of the individual with the demands of the community, he ended up, retrograde fashion, with submission both to the temporal and the spiritual authorities, with veneration for the Tsar and the God of the Christians, and a narrow Russian nationalism, a position which lesser minds have reached with less effort. This is the weak point of the great personality. Dostoevsky threw away the chance of becoming a teacher and liberator of humanity; instead, he appointed himself its gaoler. The future of civilization will have little to thank him for. It is probable that he was condemned to such frustration by his neurosis. The greatness of his intellect and the strength of his love for humanity should have opened to him another, apostolic, way of life.

To treat Dostoevsky as a sinner and a criminal rouses violent resistance which need not be based on the philistine assessment of the criminal. The real motive soon becomes apparent: two traits are important in the criminal, boundless egoism and a strong destructive tendency, both in conjunction; and the conditions for their expression is the absence of love, the lack of an affective valuation of (human) objects. One immediately recalls the contrast presented by Dostoevsky, his great need of love and his enormous capacity for love, which expressed itself in manifestations of superhuman goodness, and enabled him to love and help where he was justified in hatred and revenge—for example, in his relations with his first wife and her lover. That being so, we have to ask whence comes the temptation to reckon Dostoevsky among the criminals. The answer is that it comes from his choice of material, which singles out from all others violent, murderous, and egoistic characters, which points to the existence of similar tendencies in his own soul, and also from certain facts in his life, like his passion for gambling, and perhaps the sexual abuse of a young

girl (*A Confession*¹). The contradiction is resolved by the perception that Dostoevsky's very strong destructive impulse, which might easily have made him a criminal, was in his life directed mainly against his own person (inward instead of outward), and thus found expression in masochism and the sense of guilt. His personality, moreover, contains sadistic characteristics in plenty, which are expressed in his irritability, his love of tormenting, and his intolerance even toward persons he loved, and which appear also in the way in which, as an author, he treats his readers. That is, in little things he was a sadist to others, in bigger things a sadist to himself, that is, a masochist, who is the mildest, kindest, most helpful human being possible.

We have explored three factors in Dostoevsky's complex personality, one quantitative and two qualitative: his extraordinary degree of affectivity, the perverse impulsive structure which inevitably marked him out as a sado-masochist or a criminal, and his unanalyzable artistic endowment. This combination might very well exist without neurosis; in fact, complete masochists are never neurotic. But, according to the balance of forces between the impulse claims and the inhibitions opposing them (*plus* the available methods of sublimation), Dostoevsky would still have to be classified as a so-called "impulsive character." But the position is obscured by the presence of the neurosis, which as I have already said, is not in the circumstances indispensable, but which comes into being all the more readily, the richer the complexity which has to be controlled by the ego. For the neurosis is only a sign that the ego has not succeeded in making a synthesis, that it has forfeited its harmony in making the attempt.

How then does the neurosis in the strict sense show itself? Dostoevsky called himself an epileptic and was accepted as such by other people, on the strength of his serious attacks, which were accompanied by loss of consciousness, muscular convulsions, and subsequent depression. Now it is highly probable that this so-called epilepsy was only a symptom of his neurosis, and must, accordingly, be classified as hystero-epilepsy, that is, as serious hysteria. We cannot be completely certain on this point for two reasons, first, because the medical data on Dostoevsky's "epilepsy" are de-

fective and untrustworthy, and secondly, because our understanding of morbid conditions combined with epileptiform attacks is imperfect.

To take the second point first. It is unnecessary to reproduce here the entire pathology of epilepsy; it would serve no useful purpose. But this may be said. The old *morbus sacer* is still in evidence as an ostensible clinical entity, the mysterious disease with its incalculable, apparently unprovoked convulsive seizures, its changing of the character into irritability and aggressiveness, and the progressive decline of all the mental faculties. But in the last resort this picture flickers and becomes blurred. The seizures, the onset of which is savage, accompanied by biting of the tongue and incontinence of urine, working up to the dangerous *status epilepticus*, may, however, be reduced to brief periods of absence, mere transient loss of consciousness, and may be replaced by short periods in which the patient, under the control of the unconscious, does something foreign to his character. Although otherwise conditioned by purely physical causes in a way we do not understand, the first appearance of the attacks may be due to some purely psychical influence (fright), or, further, they may react to psychic stimuli. However characteristic intellectual impairment may be of the overwhelming majority of cases, at least one case is known in which the affliction did not interfere with the functioning of the highest intellectual faculties (Helmholtz). (Other cases of which the same fact is alleged are either uncertain or open to the same objections as that of Dostoevsky himself.) Patients who are victims of epilepsy may give an impression of dullness and arrested development, just as the disease is frequently accompanied by the most palpable idiocy and the most serious mental defects, even although these are not a necessary element of the clinical picture. These seizures, however, with all their variations, also occur in persons who show complete mental development, and who, previous to their onset, possess an excessive, generally imperfectly controlled affectivity. It is no wonder in these circumstances that it has been found impossible to determine a single clinical entity, "epilepsy." The similarity of the external symptoms seems to demand a functional conception, as if the mechanism of the abnormal

impulsive discharge were organically prepared in advance, to be called upon in quite different conditions, both during disturbances of the cerebral activity due to serious histolytic and toxic affections, and also in case of inadequate control of the psychic economy, the action of the energy working in the soul in a crisis. But behind the division we glimpse the identity of the fundamental mechanism of the impulsive outlet. The same thing must to some extent apply to sexual processes: the earliest doctors called the *coitus* a little epilepsy, that is, they recognized in the sexual act a mitigation and adaptation of the epileptic irritation outlet.

The "epileptic reaction," as this common element may be called, without doubt also places itself at the disposal of the neurosis, the essence of which is to get rid, by somatic means, of masses of stimuli which it cannot deal with psychically. The epileptic seizure is thus a symptom of hysteria; and is adapted and modified by it, as is also done by the normal sexual discharge. It is, therefore, quite right to distinguish between organic and "affective" epilepsy. The practical significance of this is that the person who suffers from the one kind is mentally disordered, and the person who suffers from the other, a neurotic. In the first case, the psychic life is subject to an alien disturbance from without; in the second, the disturbance is an expression of the psychic life itself.

It is extremely probable that Dostoevsky's epilepsy was of the second kind. This cannot, strictly speaking, be proved; to do that one would have to be able to fix the first appearance of the epilepsy and the subsequent fluctuations of the attacks in the continuity of his psychic life, and for that we know too little. The descriptions of the seizures themselves teach us nothing, our information about the relations between the seizures and Dostoevsky's experiences are defective and often inconsistent. The most probable assumption is that the attacks go back to his childhood, that the symptoms were mild to start with, and did not assume epileptic form until after the terrible experience of his eighteenth year, the murder of his father.² It would be very convenient if it could be established that the attacks ceased entirely during his exile in Siberia, but other accounts are opposed to this.³

The unmistakable connection between the murder of the father

in *The Brothers Karamazov* and the fate of Dostoevsky's father has struck more than one of his biographers, and has caused them to refer to a "certain modern psychological school." A psychoanalytical consideration—for it is psychoanalysis that is meant—is tempted to see in this event the most serious *trauma*, and in Dostoevsky's reaction to it, the crucial point of his neurosis.

But if I undertake to substantiate this idea by means of psychoanalysis, I expose myself to the danger of being unintelligible to all those readers who are unfamiliar with the language and teaching of psychoanalysis.

We have one certain starting point. We know the meaning of the first attacks from which Dostoevsky suffered in his early youth, long before the incidence of the "epilepsy." These attacks had a death significance: they were brought on by the fear of death and consisted of a lethargic somnolent condition. The disease first came upon him as a boy in the form of a sudden groundless melancholy, "a feeling," as he later told his friend Soloviev, "that I was going to die on the spot, and this was actually followed by a state exactly similar to real death. . . ." His brother Andrei tells us that in his childhood Fedor used to leave little notes about before he went to sleep; he was afraid that he would fall into a deathlike sleep during the night and begged that his burial should be postponed for five days.⁴

We know the meaning and intention of such death seizures. They signify identification with a dead person, either one who is really dead, or one still alive whom one wishes dead. The latter case is the more important. The attack has then the value of a punishment. You have wished another person's death, you become that person and are yourself dead. Psychoanalytic doctrine here makes the assertion that this other person for a boy is usually the father; the hysterical attack is thus a punishment for having wished for the death of a hated father.

Parricide is, according to a well-known conception, the chief and primitive crime of humanity as well as of the individual.⁵ It is in any case the main source of the sense of guilt; we do not know if it is the only one. Researches have not yet established the psychic origin of guilt and the need for expiation. But it is not necessary

for it to be the only one. The psychological position is complicated and requires explanation. The relation of the boy to the father is, as we say, an "ambivalent" one (that is, composed of conflicting feelings of tenderness and hostility). In addition to the hate which wants to remove the father as a rival, a measure of tenderness for him also exists as a rule. Both attitudes of mind combine to produce identification with the father: the boy wants to be in his father's place because he admires him and wants to be like him, and also because he wishes to put him out of his way. This evolution now comes up against a serious obstacle. At a certain moment the child comes to understand that the attempt to remove the father as a rival would be punished by the father with castration. From fear of castration, that is, in the interests of preserving his virility, arises also a wish to possess his mother and to remove the father. So far as this wish remains in the unconscious, it forms the basis of the sense of guilt. We believe that we are here describing normal processes. We have, it is true, to make an important amplification in the normal fate of the so-called Oedipus complex.

A further complication arises when the constitutional factor we call bisexuality is more strongly developed in the child. Then, under the influence of the threat to virility by castration, the tendency is strengthened to deflect in the direction of effeminacy, to put oneself in the place of the mother and take over her part as the object of the father's love. Only the fear of castration makes this also impossible. The child understands that he must suffer castration if he wants to be loved by the father as a woman. Thus, both impulses, hatred for the father and being in love with the father, become repressed. There is a certain psychological difference in the fact that the hatred of the father is abandoned in consequence of the fear of an external danger (castration), while the amorous feeling toward the father is treated as an inward impulse danger, although fundamentally it goes back to the above-mentioned external danger.

What makes hatred for the father untenable is fear of the father: castration is terrible, both as a punishment and as the price of love. Of the two factors which repress the hatred of the father, the first, the direct dread of punishment and castration, may be called the

normal one, the pathogeneuous reinforcement seems to come only with the second factor, the fear of the feminine attitude. Thus a strong bisexual predisposition becomes one of the conditions or confirmations of the neurosis. Such a predisposition must certainly be assumed in Dostoevsky and shows itself in a possible form (latent homosexuality) in the important part played by male friendships in his life, in his extraordinarily gentle attitude to rivals in love, and in his remarkable understanding of situations which are explainable only through repressed homosexuality, as many examples from his novels show.

I regret, although I cannot alter the facts, that these ideas about these attitudes of hate for and love of the father and their transformation under the influence of the threat of castration, will appear unsavory and incredible to readers unfamiliar with psychoanalysis. I should expect that it would be the castration complex that would arouse the most general repugnance. I can only assert that psychoanalytic experience has put these relations beyond the reach of doubt, and has taught us to recognize in them the key to every neurosis. This key we must then apply to our author's "epilepsy." So strange to our consciousness are the things by which our unconscious psychic life is controlled! The consequences of the repression of the hatred of the father in the Oedipus complex are not exhausted by the foregoing observations.

A new factor is that the identification with the father ultimately compels for itself a permanent place in the ego. It is adopted into the ego, but it there appoints itself a special instance for the rest of the content of the ego. We call it the superego, and ascribe to it, the inheritor of the parental influence, the most important functions.

If the father was hard, violent, and cruel, the superego takes these characteristics from him, and in its relation to the ego, the passivity which was supposed to have been repressed re-establishes itself. The superego has become sadistic, the ego becomes masochistic, that is to say, fundamentally passive like a woman. The ego has a great craving for punishment, which is partly provided by fate and partly finds satisfaction in ill-treatment by the superego (consciousness of guilt). Every punishment is at bottom cas-

tration, and, as such, a fulfillment of the old passive attitude to the father. Even fate is ultimately only a later father projection.

The normal processes in the formation of the conscience must be similar to the abnormal ones described here. We have not yet succeeded in fixing their boundaries. It will be noted that ultimately the largest share is ascribed to the passive component, the repressed femininity. Moreover, as an accidental factor, it is of importance whether the father, who is feared in any case, was in reality especially violent. This is true in Dostoevsky's case, and we shall trace back both his extraordinary sense of guilt and masochistic conduct to a very strong feminine component. Thus the formula for Dostoevsky is as follows: a person of particularly strong bisexual predisposition, who can defend himself with special intensity against dependence on an especially hard father. The character of bisexuality we add to the earlier-mentioned components of his nature. The youthful symptom of the deathlike seizures is thus explained as a father identification of the ego, admitted by the superego as a form of punishment. You wished to kill your father in order to be your father. Now you are the father, but the dead father. The ordinary mechanism of hysterical symptoms. And further: Now your father kills you. For the ego the death symptom is a phantasy satisfaction of the male wish, and, at the same time, a masochistic satisfaction; for the superego, it is a punishment satisfaction, that is, a sadistic satisfaction. Both of them, the ego and the superego, carry on the role of the father. To sum up, the relation between the person and the father object, by retaining its content, is transformed into a relation between the ego and the superego, a new setting on a fresh stage. Such infantile reactions from the Oedipus complex may disappear if reality gives them no further nourishment. But the character of the father remains the same, or rather, it deteriorates with the years, and so Dostoevsky's hatred for the father, his wish for the death of this wicked father, is maintained. Now it is dangerous if reality fulfills such repressed wishes. Phantasy has become reality, all defensive measures are reinforced. Dostoevsky's seizures now assume an epileptic character; they still of course signify the father identification as a means of punishment, but they have become terrible, like the frightful death of the father itself. What

further content they have absorbed, particularly sexual content, escapes conjecture.

One thing is noteworthy. In the aura of the epileptic attack, one moment of supreme happiness is felt, which may very well have been the fixation of the triumph and the liberation felt at hearing the news of the death, to be followed immediately by an all the more cruel punishment. We have divined just such a sequence of triumph and mourning, festive joy and mourning, in the brothers of the primal horde who murdered their father, and we find it repeated in the ceremony of the funeral feast. If it had happened that Dostoevsky had been free from his seizures in Siberia, this would only substantiate the view that his seizures were his punishment. He did not need them any longer, when he had been punished in another way. But this cannot be proved. Rather does the necessity of punishment felt by Dostoevsky's psychic economy explain the fact that he lived through these years of misery and humiliation without breaking down. Dostoevsky's sentence as a political offender was unjust; he must have been aware of this, but he accepted this undeserved punishment at the hands of the Tsar, the Little Father, as a substitute for the punishment he deserved for his sin against his real father. Instead of punishing himself, he let himself be punished by his father's deputy. We glimpse here a proof of the psychological justification of penalties imposed by society. It is a fact that large groups of criminals long for punishment. Their superego demands it, thus saving itself from inflicting the punishment.

Everyone who is familiar with the complicated transformation of meaning undergone by hysterical symptoms will understand that no further attempt will be made here, beyond this beginning, to fathom the meaning of Dostoevsky's attacks.⁶ It is enough that we may assume that the original meaning remains unchanged behind all later overlayings. It may be said that Dostoevsky never got free from the remorse due to his desire to murder his father. It also determined his attitude to the two other domains in which the father relation is the decisive factor, the authority of the State and religion. In the first he ended up with complete submission to the Tsar, the Little Father, who in reality had once played with him the

comedy of murder which his attacks so often preluded for him. Here penitence gained the upper hand. In the religious sphere he retained more freedom: according to apparently reliable reports, up to the last instant of his life, he wavered between faith and atheism. His great intellect made it impossible for him to overlook a single one of the intellectual difficulties to which faith leads. By an individual repetition of historical evolution, he hoped to find a way out and a redemption from guilt in the Christ ideal, to use his very sufferings as a claim to a Christ role. That he did not entirely succeed in this and become a reactionary was due to the fact that the universal human filial guilt, on which religious feeling is built, had in him attained to a superindividual strength, and remained insuperable even to his great mind. Here we are laying ourselves open to the objection that we have abandoned the impartiality of analysis, and are subjecting Dostoevsky to values which are justifiable only from the partial standpoint of a definite philosophy. A conservative would take the side of the Grand Inquisitor, and judge Dostoevsky differently. The objection is just; one can only say in extenuation that Dostoevsky's decision appears to have been determined by an intellectual inhibition due to his neurosis.

It can scarcely be mere coincidence that three of the masterpieces of the literature of all time, the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, should all deal with the same subject, a father's murder. In all three, too, the motive for the deed, sexual rivalry for the woman, is laid bare. The most straightforward is certainly the representation in the drama built up on the Greek legend. In it the hero himself commits the crime. But poetic treatment is impossible without softening and disguise. The naked confession of a desire to murder a father, as we arrive at it in analysis, seems intolerable to people without analytical training. The Greek drama, while retaining the crime, introduces the indispensable toning down in a masterly fashion by projecting the motive of the hero into the real as a compulsion of destiny external to himself. The hero commits the fatal deed unintentionally and apparently uninfluenced by the woman; the connection is, however, preserved by making the winning of the

Queen-mother dependent on a repetition of the deed on the Sphinx, the monster which symbolizes the father. After the guilt is revealed to consciousness, the hero makes no attempt to exculpate himself by appealing to the expedient of the compulsion of destiny. The guilt is recognized and punished as a conscious crime, which is bound to appear unjust, but which psychologically is perfectly right. The presentation in the English play is more indirect: there the hero does not commit the crime himself; it is committed by another, for whom it is not parricide. The revolting motive of sexual rivalry for the woman does not, therefore, need to be disguised. Also, we see the Oedipus complex of the hero, as it were, in a reflected light, by learning the effect on him of the mother's crime. He has to avenge the crime, but proves in a very remarkable way incapable of doing so. We know that it is his remorse that cripples him; in a way quite consistent with neurotic processes, the remorse is displaced upon the perception of his inadequacy for fulfilling his task. There are signs that the hero feels this guilt as a superindividual one. He despises others no less than himself: "Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?"

The Russian novel goes a step farther in this direction. Here also the murder is committed by another, but that other is one who stands to the murdered man in the same filial relation as the hero, Dmitri, another, in whom the motive of sexual rivalry is openly admitted, and to whom Dostoevsky has most remarkably attributed his own disease, alleged epilepsy, as if he were trying to confess that the epileptic, the neurotic, in him was a parricide. Then follows in the speech for the defense the famous mockery of psychology, which is a double-edged weapon. A magnificent disguise, which has only to be turned round to discover the deepest meaning of Dostoevsky's conception. It is not psychology which deserves mockery, but the procedure of judicial examination. It is a matter of indifference who actually committed the crime; psychology is interested only in discovering who desired it, and who welcomed it when it was done, and for that reason, all the brothers are equally guilty, even the sharply contrasted figure of Aliosha, the impulsive sensual man, the skeptical cynic and the epileptic criminal. In *The Brothers Karamazov* we find one very significant

scene. The Elder in his conversation with Dmitri has discovered that Dmitri bears in himself a readiness to murder his father, and throws himself at his feet. It is impossible that this is meant as an expression of admiration; it must signify that the holy man is rejecting the temptation to despise or shrink from the murderer, and, therefore, humiliates himself before him. Dostoevsky's sympathy for the criminal is in fact boundless: it goes far beyond the pity which the unhappy wretch can claim, and reminds us of the "sacred awe" with which epileptics and lunatics were treated in olden days. The criminal is to him almost a Redeemer, who has taken on himself the guilt which others would otherwise have had to bear. One need not now commit murder, after he has committed murder, but one must be grateful to him, because, without him, one would oneself have to have been a murderer. That is not pure kindness and sympathy; it is identification on the basis of a similar murderous impulse, in reality a slightly displaced narcissism. This is not to dispute the ethical value of this kindness. Perhaps the mechanism of kindly sympathy in other men is the same, only it is particularly easy to discern in the extreme case of the novelist, who was ridden by the sense of guilt. There is no doubt that this identifying sympathy was a decisive factor in determining Dostoevsky's choice of material. He dealt first with the common criminal—the criminal from egoism—the political and the religious criminal, and not until the end of his life did he come back to the primal criminal, the parricide, and in him made his poetical confession.

The publication of Dostoevsky's posthumous papers and of the diaries of his wife has thrown a bright light on one episode in his life, namely the period in Germany when he was obsessed with the gambling mania (*Dostojewski am Roulette*), which it is impossible to regard otherwise than as an unmistakable fit of pathological passion. There was no lack of ways of rationalizing this remarkable and unworthy behavior. As often happens with neurotics, the sense of guilt had taken tangible shape in the form of a burden of debt, and Dostoevsky was able to take refuge behind the pretext that he was trying by his winnings at the tables to make it possible for him to return to Russia without being arrested by his creditors. But that

was only a pretext; Dostoevsky was acute enough to recognize this and honest enough to confess it. He knew that the chief thing was the gambling in itself, *le jeu pour le jeu*.⁷ All the details of his impulsively irrational conduct show this, and something more as well. He never rested until he had lost everything. Gambling was for him also a method of self-punishment. He had time and again given his young wife his promise or his word of honor not to play again, or not to play again on a particular day, and, according to her, he almost always broke it. When his losses had reduced himself and her to the direst need, he derived a second pathological satisfaction from that. He could abuse and humiliate himself to her, invite her to despise him and to regret that she had married an old sinner; and when he had unburdened his conscience in this way, the gambling was resumed next day. The young wife accustomed herself to this cycle, because she had noticed that the one thing which offered any real hope of escape, namely his literary activity, was never more successful than when they had lost everything and pawned their last possessions. Naturally she did not understand the connection. When his sense of guilt was satisfied by the punishments he had imposed on himself, the inhibitions to work ceased to operate, and he allowed himself to take a few steps on the way to success.⁸

What part of long-buried childhood compels its repetition in the gambler's compulsion may without difficulty be divined from a story by a young novelist. Stefan Zweig, who, by the way, has himself devoted a study to Dostoevsky (*Drei Meister*), in a collection of three long short stories, *Die Verwirrung der Gefühle* (*The Confusion of the Emotions*), has a story which he calls *Vierundzwanzig Stunden aus dem Leben einer Frau* (*Four-and-Twenty Hours in a Woman's Life*). This little masterpiece ostensibly purports only to show what an irresponsible creature woman is, and to what excesses, surprising even to herself, an unexpected experience may drive her. But the story tells far more than this: when it is subjected to an analytical interpretation it represents without such apologetic tendencies something quite different, something universally human or rather masculine. And such an interpretation is so obvious that it cannot be denied. It is characteristic of the

nature of artistic creation that the author, who is a personal friend, was able to assure me that the interpretation given by me was completely alien both to his mind and his intention, although many details were woven into the narrative which seemed expressly designed to indicate the secret clue. In the story a distinguished elderly lady tells the author of an experience she had had twenty years before. She had been left a widow when still young, and was the mother of two sons, who no longer needed her. Expecting nothing further from life, at the age of forty-two, on one of her aimless journeyings, she visited the Casino at Monte Carlo, where, among all the remarkable sights of the place, she was soon fascinated by two hands, which seemed to betray all the feelings of the unlucky gambler with terrifying sincerity and intensity. These hands belonged to a handsome young man—the author unintentionally makes him the same age as the eldest son of the narrator—who, after having lost everything, left the room in the depths of despair, evidently with the intention of ending his hopeless life in the gardens. An inexplicable feeling of sympathy compels her to follow him and make every effort to save him. He takes her for one of the importunate women so common there, and tries to shake her off; but she stays with him and finds herself obliged in the most natural way possible to share his room at the hotel, and finally his bed. After this improvised night of love, she exacts from the young man, now apparently calmed down, a promise that he will never play again, provides him with money for his journey home and undertakes to meet him at the station before the departure of the train. Then she begins to feel a great tenderness for him, wants to sacrifice everything to keep him, and makes up her mind to go with him instead of saying good-by. Various adverse circumstances make her miss the train, and in her longing for the lost one, she again visits the gaming rooms, and there, to her horror, sees once more the hands which had first excited her sympathy: the faithless boy had gone back to his gambling. She reminds him of his promise, but, obsessed by his passion, he calls her a spoilsport, tells her to get out, and flings down the money with which she had tried to save him. She hurries away deeply mortified, and learns later that she has not succeeded in rescuing him from suicide.

This brilliantly told, perfectly motivated story indeed exists in its own right, and is certain of deeply affecting all readers. But psychoanalysis shows us that its invention is based on the extinction of a wish phantasy belonging to the period of puberty, which many people consciously remember. The phantasy embodies a wish that the mother should herself initiate the boy into sexual life in order to save him from the dreaded evils of onanism. All the "release" poetic inventions which we find so frequently, have the same origin. The vice of onanism is replaced by the passion for gambling; the emphasis laid on the passionate activity of the hands betrays this derivation. The gambling mania is actually an equivalent of the old onanism compulsion; "playing" is the very word used in the nursery for the activity of the hands in masturbation. The irresistibility of the temptation, the solemn, never kept, resolutions never to do it, the soothing pleasure, and the bad conscience which tells him that he is ruining himself (suicide), remain unaltered in the substitution. Zweig's story is told from the point of view of the mother, not of the son. The son may cajole himself by thinking: if my mother knew what dangers onanism may involve me in, she would certainly save me by permitting me to lavish my tenderness on her own body. The identification of the mother with the prostitute made by the young man in the story belongs to the same phantasy. It brings the unattainable within easy reach. The bad conscience which accompanies this phantasy entails the unhappy ending of the story. It is also interesting to note how the external circumstances employed by the author in the story try to conceal its analytic meaning. For it is extremely questionable whether the love life of woman is controlled by sudden and mysterious impulses. Analysis rather goes to show that there is adequate motivation for the surprising behavior of a woman who has hitherto rejected love. Faithful to the memory of her dead husband, she has armed herself against all similar claims, but—and here the phantasy of the son is right—she, as mother, has not escaped transference of love to the son, of which she is entirely unconscious, and fate is able to capture her at this undefended spot.

If the gambling habit, with its unsuccessful struggles to break oneself from it and its opportunities for self-punishment, is a repe-

tion of the onanism compulsion, we shall not be surprised that it gained such a firm place in Dostoevsky's life. We find no case of serious neurosis in which the autoerotic satisfaction of immaturity and puberty does not play its part, and the relations between the effort to suppress it and the fear of the father are so well-known that they need only be mentioned.⁹

(Translated by D. F. Tait)

¹ See the discussion of this point in *Der unbekannte Dostojewski*, 1926. Stefan Zweig says: "He does not stop before the chambers of bourgeois morality, and no one can say exactly how far he transgressed the bounds of law in his own life, or how much of the criminal instincts of his heroes was realised in him" (*Drei Meister*, 1920). For the intimate relations between Dostoevsky's characters and his own experiences, see the arguments in the introductory section of René Fülöp-Miller's *Dostojewski am Roulette*, 1925, which relate to Nikolai Strakhov.

² See René Fülöp-Miller's article, *Dostojewski's Heilige Krankheit*, in *Wissen und Leben*, Nos. 19-20 (1924). Of special interest is the information that in the novelist's childhood, "something terrible, agonising and unforgettable" happened, to which the first signs of his disease may be traced (Suvorin in an article in the *Novoe Vremia* for 1881, quoted in the introduction to *Dostojewski am Roulette*, p. xlv). Further, Orest Miller in *Dostojewski's autobiographische Schriften* says: "There is, however, another special piece of evidence about Fedor Mikhailovich's illness, which relates to his earliest youth, and brings the illness into relation with a tragic event in the family life of his parents. But, although this piece of evidence was given to me orally by one who was a close friend of Dostoevsky, because I can nowhere find confirmation of it, I am unable to make up my mind to give an exact and detailed account of it" (p. 140). Biographers and scientific researchers cannot be grateful for this discretion.

³ Most of the accounts, including Dostoevsky's own, maintain rather that the illness first assumed a definite epileptic character during the exile in Siberia. Unfortunately there is reason to distrust the autobiographical accounts of neurotics. Experience shows that their memories introduce falsifications designed to break down an unpleasant causal connection. Nevertheless, it appears certain that his time in a Siberian prison markedly altered Dostoevsky's morbid state. Cf. *Dostojewski's Heilige Krankheit*, p. 1186.

⁴ *Dostojewski am Roulette*, Introduction, p. lx.

⁵ See the author's *Totem und Tabu*.

⁶ See *Totem und Tabu*. The best account of the meaning and content of his seizures was given by Dostoevsky himself, when he told his friend Strakhov that the irritability and depression which followed an epileptic seizure were due to the fact that he seemed to himself a criminal, and could not get rid of the feeling that he was guilty of an offense unknown to him,

that he had committed a terrible evil deed, which oppressed him (*Dostojewski's Heilige Krankheit*, p. 1188). In these complaints, psychoanalysis sees a proof of recognition of the "psychic reality," and tries to bring a knowledge of the unknown offense to the surface of consciousness.

⁷ "The main thing is the gambling itself," he wrote in one of his letters. "I swear that greed for money has nothing to do with it, although Heaven knows I am sorely in need of money."

⁸ "He always remained at the gambling tables until he had lost everything and was completely ruined. It was only when the damage was complete that the demon at last retired from his soul and made way for the creative genius." (*Dostojewski am Roulette*, p. lxxxvi.)

⁹ Most of the views here expressed are also contained in the excellent book of Solan Neufeld, published in 1923, *Dostojewski, Skizze zu seiner Psychoanalyse*.

SELMA FRAIBERG

Kafka and the Dream

FOR MOST OF his life, it appears, Kafka lived on terms of dangerous intimacy with the world of the dream. He possessed a kind of sensory knowledge of the dream and the dimensions of consciousness which could only be achieved by a man who had an extraordinary relationship to his own inner life. This knowledge did not come from a clinical study of his own states of consciousness and I feel certain that it did not come from psychoanalytic texts. Kafka was not an academic student of the mind. He was, however, a meticulous observer of his own mental activity.

There is evidence that he experienced mental states in which dreamlike images and fantasies emerged, then were caught and held in consciousness; naked specimens of unconscious productions. Often he preserved these things in his notebooks, recorded along with the texts of nocturnal dreams, obsessional thoughts, fragments of memories, and hundreds of other bits and pieces of the disordered contents of his inner world. Here and there in the Kafka stories a piece from this attic debris makes its ghostly reappearance. In many instances a dream, a fantasy or a piece of imagery recorded in the notebooks becomes the starting point for

a sketch or a story. There is evidence, then, that he not only made exhaustive investigations of his own mental processes, but also that he made use of his discoveries in his writing.

Introspection for Kafka was not a reflective process but a disease, the compulsion of his morbid guilt, which drew him deeper and deeper into psychic depths in hopeless pursuit of the crime and the judgment. It was an obsessional occupation which became a torment for him and slowly widened the gap between himself and the real world. In 1922 this estrangement reached a critical point and Kafka viewed his mental state with alarm. On January 16, he writes: "This past week I suffered something very like a breakdown . . . impossible to sleep, impossible to endure life, or, more exactly, the course of life. The clocks are not in unison; the inner one runs crazily on at a devilish or demoniac or in any case inhuman pace, the outer one limps along at its usual speed. What else can happen but that the worlds split apart, and they do split apart, or at least clash in a fearful manner. There are doubtless several reasons for the wild tempo of the inner process; the most obvious one is introspection, which will suffer no idea to sink tranquilly to rest but must pursue each one into consciousness, only itself to become an idea, in turn to be pursued by renewed introspection." And later in the same entry: "The solitude that for the most part has been forced on me, in part voluntarily sought by me—but what was this if not compulsion too?—is now losing all its ambiguity and approaches its denouement. Where is it leading? The strongest likelihood is, that it may lead to madness . . ." Later that month the panic gives way to melancholy resignation. On January 28, he writes ". . . for I am now a citizen of this other world, whose relationship to the ordinary one is the relationship of the wilderness to cultivated land. . . ." And on the following day he writes: ". . . it is only that the attraction of the human world is so immense, in an instant it can make one forget everything. Yet the attraction of my world too is strong. . . ."

The mental crisis did not end as he feared in madness but in disease. This was the year of the onset of Kafka's tuberculosis. He understood his illness, and wrote to Brod, "My head has made an appointment with my lungs behind my back."

Of the two worlds, Kafka's and "the human world," it was the first that he knew best. Kafka wrote about himself, his inner experience, and the struggle with nameless tyrants, the lustful couples who copulate within the sight of the law, the endless tribunal, the comic-tragic bureaucrats and corrupt officials—all of these were not conceived as allegories for his time but were events of inner life. (His own comments and interpretations of his works repeatedly bear this out.) If his writings achieve the effect of satire and broad social caricature it is because the dream is in itself a caricature of life; the dream is in one sense an allegory. Moreover, Kafka knew this and understood it very well. In a conversation, Janouch says to Kafka: "The Metamorphosis is a terrible dream, a terrible conception." Kafka replies: "The dream reveals the reality, which conception lags behind. That is the horror of life—the terror of art. . . ."

I think it is also a mistake to look upon his writings as "Freudian allegories" or to speak of Kafka's deliberate use of "Freudian symbols." If Kafka was acquainted with psychoanalytic ideas (and there is some evidence for this), he did not pluck his symbols from clinical texts like an amateur with a drugstore dream book.

No formula for dream interpretation exists in psychoanalysis. A dream, a symbol, can be properly interpreted only through the personal associations of the dreamer. While Freud brought attention to a number of "universal" symbols, he repeatedly stressed the multideterminants in symbol choice, and hence the futility of assigning a single meaning to a symbol.

Moreover, we must admit that even those symbols which are, properly speaking, "universal" are not in themselves the material for creative work. Symbols are sterile things in themselves; it is only when the symbol is animated through personal experience, when it acquires dimensions of meaning and ambiguity, that it can evoke emotional reactions.

Kafka may have profited from the psychoanalytic investigation of dreams and dream symbolism, but he wrote out of inner experience. An investigation of Kafka symbolism will demonstrate repeatedly how little he was influenced by the arbitrary dream symbol. It seems to me to be as unprofitable to try to understand Kafka

and his writing in terms of "Freudian symbols" as it is to understand a dream apart from the dreamer's own associations.

If Kafka knew the world of the dream better than the rest of us he was not indebted to Freud but to his personal suffering. He called himself, at last, "a citizen of this other world." He was not like the rest of us, the nocturnal visitors who are favored on return with a merciful amnesia or dim recall. He had taken up his ghostly residence there, and habituation had given his eyes a special kind of night vision so that the forms and events of the dream, which ordinary dreamers call uncertain and indistinct, were tangible and real, capable of description in fine detail. Even the texts of his own dreams, recorded in his notebooks, are remarkable for the recall of detail and the visual preciseness.

The danger in such intimacy with the dream world is that the connections to the other world may be lost, and this danger was real and known to Kafka. His writing was the bridge, the connection between the two worlds, it was the strongest of the bonds which united him with the real world. And the writings themselves told the same story of the danger, or the failure, or the impossibility of human connections.

He wrote his biography in his symbolism of lost connections—the intercepted letters, the interrupted coitus, the telephones with the connections to nowhere. There is the indescribable loneliness and sadness of the little train in "The Railroad of Kalda" which makes its way into the frozen interior of Russia and regularly comes to its end in the middle of the wilderness, never to reach its destination. It is a train without mission, bearing a tiny freight and a few passengers in the course of the year, running its course between nowhere and nowhere. At the train stop the company's agent dwells in solitude in an abandoned wooden shed, in despair of life and afraid of death. The Kalda story, too, is unfinished. No man can write the end of his autobiography.

These symbols of lost connections, like all powerful symbols (and unlike those symbols which are plucked cheaply from dream books), are highly stratified and rich in latent meaning. They speak of the failures in human connections and communication which are recurrent motifs in Kafka's writing and his life. The wretched rail-

road of Kalda, once conceived by its owners in a surge of capitalist daring and hope, has come to nothing, a toy train chugging its way through vast space to its absurd and melancholy end in the wastes. This is the parable of Kafka's failure in the eyes of his father. And the ridiculous railroad, this mockery of men's extravagant hopes and ambitions, is Kafka's symbol for the failure of his own ambitions, and for the failure of his lifelong struggle with an unconquerable opponent, here represented as the vastness of a wilderness which cannot be spanned by the tiny train, in real life by the figure of a giant, the father, before whom Kafka remained an insignificant dwarf as boy and grown man. It is the symbol for the unfinished work, the uncompleted writings. It is the comment on Kafka's religious views, the failure to reach anything "beyond." And it is the symbol of biological failure. The little train which is never to reach its destination speaks eloquently and touchingly of Kafka's sexual impotence. The little train comes to its end in the middle of the wilderness, a full day's journey from Kalda, discharges its few passengers, its small freight, and returns. And the ground of this tiny settlement was frozen solid, we are told. "I was too weak to conquer the soil," said the company's agent. "A stubborn soil that was frozen solid until spring and that even resisted the sharp edge of my new axe. Whatever seed one sowed in it was lost."

It is a striking fact that Kafka, the "citizen of this other world," should have established his human fellowship in his writings through the fraternity of the dream. He had only the frailest connections with what he called "the human world" and his life was a tragedy of lost and broken communications with that world. Yet his literary genius was most pronounced in his ability to communicate elemental emotion and primal experience. It is a communication which is direct and powerful and owes its effect to a profound insight; it is the creation through the device of the private dream of a world of collective memory where each man can know his fellow.

2

It is probable that when the current enthusiasm for Kafka has run its course Kafka will emerge with less stature as a writer but with undiminished prestige as an innovator in the technique of the psychological novel. For Kafka has brought a thoroughly original and revolutionary approach to the problem of the representation of psychic dimensions in literature.

We must consider that the discoveries of psychoanalysis have made demands upon the writer which are entirely unlike those of other systems of ideas. A theory of biology, of society, of politics or of history can be given suitable expression within the framework of a narrative without straining the conventional means of communication. But a scientific theory of psychic dimensions and the primary processes of thought and imagery make unique demands upon the writer's equipment and his technique when he attempts to represent these ideas in his work.

Language, itself, as an instrument of the reasoning ego, seems opposed to working for unreason in the service of the unconscious. The higher order of thinking which is implicit in language is incompatible with the archaic mental system which governs the primary thought processes. The dream, for example, doesn't "speak" a language. It can only represent words and ideas through pictures. The spoken word or phrase, if it comes into the dream at all, is torn from the context of waking life and played back like a dusty record. Similarly, the writer's conventional devices of narration oppose the representation of unconscious thought processes. The storyteller gives order to his materials; the dreamer gives disorder to his. The story reveals, makes explicit, intends to communicate its meaning; the manifest dream conceals, disguises, has no intention of communicating.

It is understandable, then, that the writers who have attempted to bring this dimension of mind into the scope of their work have usually found it necessary to experiment upon the language itself and the techniques of narration. In one way or another these writers tried to re-create the world of the unconscious by borrowing

the method of unconscious thought processes, the so-called "primary process." The dream's method of plastic representation, ellipsis, condensation and symbol formation provided models for a new writing. The writer's problem of narration of unconscious mental processes also found solutions in the model of the dream. The dream dispenses with logical connections. Its contents are brought together only because of their associative links and without regard for order or coherence. Its meaning can only be established through translation. The transposition of unconscious thought processes in writing led to various types of "stream of consciousness" writing which, like the dream, could be understood only through interpretation.

Kafka did not trouble himself at all with the mechanical problems of entering the dream world. He found an easy solution to the problem of the language barrier. He simply walked through it. His prose style which Mann described as "a conscientious, curiously explicit, objective, clear, and correct style" undergoes no distortions, employs no language tricks and is perfectly consistent and reasonable in the reporting of events, real or delusional.

No one has succeeded with this device as Kafka has. No one else can evoke the world of the dream with such chilling authenticity. Kafka's so-called "dream technique" springs from a conception of the dream as a work of art. Kafka explored the aesthetic properties of the dream. He understood the primary relationship between unconscious mental processes and the form and composition of the dream. By taking the dream as his model in his own compositions he achieved the perfect formal conditions for the representation of unconscious experience. Now this, in itself, is not an innovation; experimental writers of this century have turned to this method of composition repeatedly in the attempt to evoke the qualities of the dream. But when Kafka unites the structural aspects of the dream with his narrative technique, his compositions achieve the most extraordinary effects of the dream itself. This is all the more impressive when we regard the seeming artlessness, the unambitious character of his narrative technique. It is simply the narration of a dream by a dreamer.

One evening I returned home to my room from the office somewhat later than usual—an acquaintance had detained me below at the house entrance for a long time—opened the door (my thoughts were still engrossed by our conversation, which had consisted chiefly of gossip about people's social standing), hung my overcoat on the hook and was about to cross over to the washstand when I heard a strange, spasmodic breathing. I looked up and, on top of the stove that stood deep in the gloom of the corner, saw something alive. Yellowish glittering eyes stared at me; large round woman's breasts rested on the shelf of the stove, on either side beneath the unrecognizable face; the creature seemed to consist entirely of a mass of soft white flesh; a thick yellowish tail hung down beside the stove, its tip ceaselessly passing back and forth over the cracks of the tiles.

The first thing I did was to cross over with long strides and sunken head—nonsense! nonsense! I kept repeating like a prayer. . . .

The effect of this passage, the immediate sense of the nightmare, is achieved not by its contents alone, not by the stove monster, but by the prose treatment. It is the conventional narration, the factual, ordinary rendering of this event which produces the effect of the uncanny. As Freud has shown, this is entirely in accord with the psychological mechanism in the experience of the uncanny by which unreal events are perceived as real, the inanimate is animated and the delusion or dream obtains conviction.¹ Kafka demonstrates by this technique that the quality of uncanniness which we attribute to the dream and the delusion is not a property of the dream itself or of unconscious experience; it belongs to the ego, the representative of consciousness and reality and is produced when a repressed idea is given illusory confirmation by an event in consciousness with the effect of momentarily breaking off the ego's contact with reality.

Now since the uncanny is not a quality of the dream itself, but derives from an impairment of an ego faculty, that of reality testing, a narrative which attempts to simulate the experience of dreaming or to evoke the "uncanniness" of the dream must deceive the critical and judging faculties of the ego through a prose which apparently sustains logic and belief at the same time that it affirms the delusion. The ideal prose for this treatment is everyday speech,

a factual narration in simple declarative sentences. The narration of events and visions from a night world in the ordinary, accustomed prose of waking life produces exactly that sense of dissolving reason which makes reality a dream and the dream a reality, in essence the quality of uncanniness.

Let us consider whether the same effect could be achieved through an experiment upon the language itself and the mode of narration. Now a prose which attempts to evoke the experience of dreaming by borrowing the method of the dreamwork must break up the structure of speech in order to bring it into a primitive system of thought. Syntax has no place in primary mental processes, and such a narrative needs to free itself from the order and restriction of language, yet cannot abandon it completely for functional reasons. Meaning will suffer through this treatment, of course, but this is a dimension of mind which is cut off from the higher mental faculties, has no reason of its own, no order or coherence, and for many purposes of the writer the obscurity and ambiguity of this liberated prose will strengthen the analogy to dreaming. Similarly, by abandoning the patterns of everyday speech, the writer can introduce phrasing and rhythms which recall the fluidity and merging forms of unconscious thought processes. Such a radical departure from the spoken language can include words, themselves. The dream can be taken as a model for bold invention and license in language. For, although it "speaks no language," it represents the word in visual forms and symbols which both mask and unmask the language of waking life and reveal the infinitely ramified structure of meaning. The writer who takes this license of the dream for himself can achieve dimensions of meaning and a richness of allusion unparalleled in everyday speech. It is unnecessary to add that these experiments upon the language demand such powerful gifts of imagination in a writer that they have only rarely produced important results.

This writing which bends the language, changes its order, its accustomed phrasing and usage, can achieve many effects of its own in the representation of unconscious mental processes, but it cannot achieve the effect of the uncanny or cause the reader to experience the dreamlike narrative as a dream. We stand outside

of the dream in reacting to this writing; certain sensory effects of the dream are induced in us, but we are not deluded. Our knowledge that this is unreal or that this is a dream is not even momentarily destroyed. This is because the distortions of language have already stamped the experience as unreal. It is analogous to a situation described by Freud in his essay on "The Uncanny." He demonstrates that the feeling which we describe as uncanny is always dependent in fiction or in life upon the appearance of unreal events as real, but when, as in fairy tales, the setting and the frankly animistic character of the events depart from the world of reality from the start, the feeling of uncanniness cannot be obtained. In the fairy tale or any fictional form, which by its setting or form of presentation, states its unreal character, the reader *willingly* participates in the delusion. In producing the experience of the uncanny in fiction the writer must take care to exclude his reader's judgment and criticism and cause him to participate in the fictional delusion without a moment's reflection or the exercise of consciousness.²

The authentic dream quality which Kafka achieves owes a large part of its effect to narrative devices which temporarily dissolve the reader's sensory contact with reality and cause him to fall back upon archaic forms of thinking. Kafka erases the boundaries between reality and the dream; his transition from one world to another is as imperceptible as the moment between waking and sleeping. In much of Kafka's writing there is this ghostly treading between two worlds, made all the more sinister by the insubstantial and muted forms of reality and the electrifying clarity of the delusion and the dream. The passage from the ordinary event of coming home from the office and hanging up a coat to the extraordinary vision of a monster occurs without an interval. In analogy with the dream the interval does not exist; it is not remarked upon for the same reason that no man knows the moment he falls asleep, loses this self for the other self in the dream, or leaves his bed to flee through hollow corridors. In re-creating through the narrative the psychic transition from waking to dreaming, Kafka brings the reader directly into the dream. He causes the reader to suspend reason and criticism, to submit to the delusion, through the simple

device of juxtaposing reality and the dream in agreement with the psychic experience of the emerging dream.

The effect is strengthened when the narrative, as in the stove-monster sequence, proceeds to treat fantastic events as real in the same way that events of the dream are experienced as real by the dreamer. The narrator did not imagine that he saw a monster; he *saw* it; and the description of the monster in fine detail supports the delusional effect in much the same way that the eyewitnesses of flying saucers support their delusions through minute descriptions of the little men, their clothing, and the size and appearance of the craft.

Kafka's use of metaphor must also be considered in a study of his "dream technique." In the dream a metaphor is represented in its literal aspect. In the metaphor, for example, it is "as if" Kafka were a species of vermin; in the story "Metamorphosis," as in a dream representation, he *is* a noxious bug. In many places in Kafka's diaries we can trace the evolution of a story or details of a story from a metaphor. In "The Letter to My Father," for example, Kafka has the father answer his reproaches in an imaginary speech in which the father says, "And there is the fight of the vermin, which not only bite, but at the same time suck the blood on which they live. . . ." In the diaries he speaks of the broken engagement with F.B. as "the tribunal in the hotel," and employs other metaphors to represent his engagement as "an arrest," himself as "a criminal." Later, in *The Trial*, we see the concrete representation of these metaphors (though I do not wish to imply that the meaning of the work is contained in these metaphors alone). Similarly we can find the genesis for the story "The Burrow" in these remarks in his diary, October 6, 1915: "Various types of nervousness. I think noises can no longer disturb me, though to be sure I am not doing any work now. Of course, the deeper one digs one's pit, the quieter it becomes, the less fearful one becomes, the quieter it becomes." In "The Burrow" he represents his illness, his fear of life, in a literal treatment of the metaphorical allusion. The small, frightened animal has dug deep into the ground, and with cunning and ingenuity he has created a labyrinth in which he is snug and safe and which assures him

escape in case of danger. "But the most beautiful thing about my burrow is the stillness."

3

In any circumstances the relationship between art and the dream is difficult to analyze. The psychoanalytic investigator needs to bear in mind Trilling's insistence that the dream-art analogy must be corrected to allow for the artist's conscious command of his fantasy. He quotes Lamb: "The . . . poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject but he has dominion over it."

Kafka provides a special case for the study of the relationship between the dream and creative work. He has given us evidence that he employed his dreams and the productions of dreamlike states in his writing. In his diaries Kafka records a large number of his own dreams. Many of these are terror dreams, dreams of torture, mutilation, flight from attackers, of lepers and whores and disease, filth, excrement; and monotonously, regularly, dreams of the father, the formidable opponent who cannot be conquered and who cannot be escaped. A number of these dreams become the starting point for a story or a sketch in the diaries, so that we can if we wish examine the relationship between the two.

Like all victims of recurrent terror dreams Kafka suffered from insomnia. He feared sleep; he feared his dreams, and the struggle against sleep and the yearning for sleep was in itself a repetition of a lifelong struggle, as if sleep had become the formidable opponent who could not be conquered and to whom it was dangerous to submit. In a conversation with Janouch he says, "Perhaps my insomnia only conceals a great fear of death. Perhaps I am afraid that the soul—which in sleep leaves me—will never return. Perhaps insomnia is only an all too vivid sense of sin, which is afraid of the possibility of a sudden judgment. Perhaps insomnia is itself a sin. Perhaps it is a rejection of the natural."

He wrote at night. *"Wenn es nicht diese grauenvollen, schlaflosen Nächte gäbe, so würde ich überhaupt nicht schreiben. So*

wird mir aber immer meine dunkle Einzelhaft bewusst." But the apparitions of the dream which he fended off through sleeplessness forced their way into the fantasies and obsessive thoughts which occupied him at these times. These fantasies were themselves very close to dream productions and were the sources of a number of stories and sketches. On one occasion Janouch attempts to pin down Kafka on the meaning of *The Verdict* (the short novel which is also published under the title "The Judgment"). Kafka, after some embarrassment, says, "*The Verdict* is the spectre of a night." "What do you mean?" "It is a spectre." "And yet you wrote it," Janouch says. And Kafka replies, "That is merely the verification, and so the complete exorcism of the spectre." So that writing for Kafka was also the rite and the magic act for the subduing of his disturbing visions. In another conversation with Janouch he allies writing and conjuration: "*Das Schreiben ist eben eine Art von Geisterbeschwörung.*"

Kafka has left us an extraordinary record for the study of the relationships between his dreams and dreamlike fantasies and his writings. I am particularly interested in the dream-story sequences in his diaries which show us how he worked with the materials of his own dreams. In each of these we see how the problem of the dream is taken up in the waking state, and how the elements of the dream are recomposed in the story. I have chosen certain examples from the dream-story sequences in the diaries in order to examine the connections between the dream and the story in each case.

In the examples which follow I employ a method of analysis which requires some justification to begin with. I am committed, of course, to the psychoanalytic principle that a dream or an imaginative work cannot be fully analyzed without the associations of the dreamer or the artist. In these studies of the dream-story sequences it can be demonstrated that the elements of the story which are related to the dream can be regarded as associations to the dream, that is that the story takes up the dream thoughts, the latent content of the dream, and develops these thoughts in a new composition. (This does not mean, of course, that the latent *meaning* of the dream is made conscious to the

writer, or that the story is an explication of the dream by the writer.) In analyzing the dream-story sequences I also make use of any other source materials, circumstantial or historical, which have a demonstrable relationship to the content of the dream or the story. When Kafka tells us the circumstances under which the dream is dreamed or the story is written we can assume a relationship between these circumstances and the production of a dream or a story which can be safely employed in an analytic investigation. We are justified in making the same use of a biographical fact (like the relationship of Kafka to his father) when this information is required for analytic study. Similarly, when Kafka shows preference for a certain type of imagery we can regard this imagery as overdetermined in the psychoanalytic sense and can draw inferences from its use in other writings which we are permitted to employ in the present investigation. So far as possible I have avoided any arbitrary interpretations of symbols.

THE WHITE HORSE SEQUENCE

This sketch appears in Kafka's diary on May 27, 1914. It derives, we find out later in the diary entry, from a kind of threshold dream which occurs in the moment before falling asleep. I will report the details later on. This entry belongs to the period during which Kafka was tormented with doubts about his approaching engagement to F.B. in Berlin.

I have chosen this sketch to begin with because it is useful as a small-scale model for the study of the transformation of dream elements into a story. Following is a condensation of the story:

The first appearance of the white horse was on an autumn afternoon in a large but not very busy street in the city of A. It passed through the entranceway of a house in whose yard a trucking company had extensive storerooms; . . . [The horse escaped before the eyes of onlookers and made its way undisturbed through the streets of the city to the outermost streets of the suburbs.] It accommodated itself to the life of the streets better than horses running alone usually do. Its slow pace could frighten no one, it never strayed out of the roadway or from its own side of the street; when it was obliged to stop for a vehicle coming out

of a cross street, it stopped; had the most careful driver been leading it by the halter it could not have behaved more perfectly. Still, of course, it was a conspicuous sight; here and there someone stopped and looked after it with a smile, a teamster in a passing beer wagon jokingly struck down at the horse with his whip; it was frightened of course, and reared, but did not quicken its pace.

It was just this incident, however, that a policeman saw; he went over to the horse, who at the very last moment had tried to turn off in another direction, took hold of the reins (despite its light frame it wore the harness of a dray horse) and said, though in a very friendly way: "Whoa! Now where do you think you are running off to?" He held on to it for some time in the middle of the road, thinking that the animal's owner would soon be along after the runaway.

Kafka follows the unfinished sketch with these remarks:

It has meaning but it is weak; its blood flows thin, too far from the heart. There are still some pretty scenes in my head but I will stop regardless. *Yesterday the white horse appeared to me for the first time before I fell asleep; I have an impression of its first stepping out of my head, which was turned to the wall, jumping across me and down from the bed and then disappearing.* The last is unfortunately not refuted by the fact of my having begun the story. [Italics mine. S.F.]

The story of the white horse is inspired by an experience which is not at all uncommon at the moment of falling asleep. It belongs to a group of phenomena which Freud describes in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and to which the name "hypnagogic hallucination" was given. In such instances a thought which occurs in the moment before falling asleep (or in a state of fatigue) is condensed and given a pictorial representation. The mental processes which produce this experience are identical with those of dream formation, and for all practical purposes such phenomena can be regarded as dream phenomena. We can even regard such experiences as part of the process of falling asleep, and the preliminary phase of dreaming. If the process is not interrupted it would normally lead to sleep and further elaboration of the idea in a dream.

We know that Kafka warded off sleep because of his anxiety, his fear of loss of self and his fear of his dreams. The vision of

the white horse appears to be the preliminary phase of a dream which was interrupted. There are many such examples in Kafka's diaries. He describes a sleepless night (Oct. 3, 1911): "Again it was the power of my dreams, shining forth into wakefulness even before I fall asleep, which did not let me sleep." And earlier (Oct. 2, 1911): ". . . So that indeed I sleep but at the same time vivid dreams keep me awake. I sleep alongside myself, so to speak, while I myself must struggle with dreams. . . . In short, I spend the whole night in that state in which a healthy person finds himself for a short time before really falling asleep. . . ."

Like any dream symbol, Kafka's white horse must be regarded as overdetermined. On one level the vision of the white horse can be taken as the representation of the dreamer's conscious ego which "disappears" in the moment of falling asleep. We recall Kafka's own words in describing his fear of sleep. "Perhaps I am afraid that the soul—which in sleep leaves me—will never return." Kafka catches hold of the white horse, figuratively speaking, and brings him back.

But in accordance with psychoanalytic findings on the structure of dream symbols, we should also expect to find that the white horse satisfies the need for representation of a preconscious thought or wish and an instinctual wish. The preconscious wish is not difficult to establish if we take the dream and the story together. It must be the wish to run away, to escape. (I will come back to the content of this wish later.) This wish is then translated into pictures in which the white horse steps out of Kafka's head, jumps across him and disappears. But this idea is not permitted further elaboration in a dream. The dream process is interrupted and the dreamer rouses himself. The wish persists in the waking state and provides the motive for a story in which the wish to escape is elaborated. The story makes use of the dream imagery by transposing some of the details. The horse which stepped out of Kafka's head and disappeared, now steps out of the entrance-way of a house and escapes. All that follows is an elaboration of the theme "to run away."

To run away from what? I have already mentioned that the white horse sequence occurs in the diaries during the week which

preceded Kafka's formal engagement to F.B. For months before the event Kafka's diary is filled with his doubts and his torments about the coming engagement. Approaching marriage exposed the full strength of his neurotic conflict. In "The Judgment" and "Metamorphosis," in the diary entries of this period we see him engaged in a futile struggle to break the ties with his father, to become a man. The demands upon his masculinity bring forth all his doubts and his fears about himself. There is revulsion at the thought of sexual intimacy, the sight of his parents' bed, the prospects of his own marriage bed. "Coitus as punishment for the happiness of being together. Live as ascetically as possible, more ascetically than a bachelor, that is the only possible way for me to endure marriage. But she?" (Aug. 14, 1913) "The fear of the connection, of passing into the other. Then I'll never be alone again." (July 21, 1913) Thoughts of escaping this marriage made their appearance again and again in the diaries of this period.

The white horse entry appears May 27, 1914. Kafka leaves for Berlin on May 30 to celebrate his engagement to F.B. On June 6 he describes the engagement: "Back from Berlin. Was tied hand and foot like a criminal. Had they sat me down in a corner bound in real chains, placed policemen in front of me and let me look on simply like that, it could not have been worse. And that was my engagement. . . ."

The connections between the fantasy of a runaway horse and the dreaded engagement are very clear. In the fantasy the Kafka horse makes its escape and proceeds unhindered through the streets of the city. In the suburbs Kafka allows a policeman to take hold of the reins and bring the runaway horse to a halt, as if in acknowledgment of his own inescapable fate which waits in another city, the engagement in Berlin. The imagery of "arrest" is employed in stronger form in Kafka's description of his formal engagement a week later. Here he is caught after trying to escape like the unhappy horse, "tied hand and foot like a criminal," and completes the picture of an arrest with metaphorical policemen and chains. These metaphors appealed to him and we find them used again in *The Trial* which begins with the arrest of Joseph K.

There, too, among other meanings of this complex symbol, "the arrest" stands for the engagement, the surrender of freedom.

All of this provides one useful piece of information in our investigation of Kafka's use of a dream element in the composition of a story. It is this: One of the wish motives of the dream represented by the escaping horse persists in the waking state, and finds its connections again with a problem in reality, the approaching marriage. Kafka then employs the dream imagery, the escaping white horse, for a fantasy in which the wish to escape from marriage is presented in disguised form.

But then we need to ask, "Why didn't this wish pursue its course in a dream?" We have established a motive for a work of the imagination but we haven't explained why this work should take place in consciousness or why it should not take place in a dream.

We are on safe grounds psychoanalytically if we make the inference that the dream process was broken off because the white horse was also the symbol of a repressed wish which could not be liberated in a dream without creating anxiety in the dreamer. The danger is not presented by the preconscious wish to escape. We know this not only from the theory of dreams but from the evidence of the story which Kafka writes. If it were dangerous to wish to escape from marriage the story would not be written either. The danger must come from a deeper layer of this conflict over marriage, from the instinctual side of the horse symbol. For like any dream symbol the white horse is the representation of an instinctual wish as well as the preconscious wish which we have discerned. Since the two wishes are fused in the dream symbol, the fate of the preconscious wish will be bound to that of the instinctual wish. If the instinctual wish is regarded as dangerous by the dreamer's ego the dream process will be interrupted and the secondary wish will automatically be subjected to the same fate.

But now a crucial argument can be raised. If all this is so why shouldn't the same conditions have affected the writing of a story? Theoretically if the repressed wish were to attempt to break through into consciousness during the writing of the story, the

ego would again defend against the danger, an inhibition would be set up which would affect the secondary wish "to escape" in the same way as in the dream, and the whole process of associated ideas would be subjected to the fate of the instinctual wish; it would be broken off. In this case a story could not be written either!

My interest in this point is not academic, of course. I think we really need to examine the fate of the instinctual wish in order to find out why a wish can be elaborated in a conscious fantasy and not in a dream, why a man writes a story about a horse instead of dreaming about a horse. But this line of investigation poses its own problems. If the wish is repressed how are we to know what it is? Since the dreamer in this case cannot give his co-operation in analyzing his dream we will attempt to use the next best means and see if details of the story of the white horse can provide "associations" which lead us to the repressed wish as well as the preconscious wish to escape.

We know that in any case (outside psychosis) a repressed idea will not emerge into consciousness in its naked, primal sense but will become known to us through the defenses which the ego has set up to prevent it from becoming conscious. If the story of the white horse has its genesis in a dream the story will reveal the repressed wish of the dream through defense.

Now the special attribute of Kafka's white horse in the story is its irreproachable conduct. It is a runaway horse which does not behave like a runaway horse. "Its slow pace could frighten no one. . . . Had the most careful driver been leading it by the halter it could not have behaved more perfectly." The emphasis throughout the story upon the good conduct and restraint of this horse would suggest that it is just this which we should regard as defense. More specifically, a quality of a runaway horse, its uncontrolled, instinctual quality has been transformed in this story into its opposite; it is under control, master of itself, even though it is unbridled. I would suggest, then, that the danger in the dream was instinctual danger, as represented in the symbol, "a runaway horse," that the animal was the representative of erotic and aggressive urges which could not be liberated in the dream without

creating anxiety in the dreamer. This danger would provide the motive for interruption of the dream process and the process of falling asleep so that neither the instinctual wish nor the preconscious wish "to escape" are capable of further elaboration in the dream.

In the story of the white horse we see how the product of a conscious fantasy has certain advantages over a dream. The story can make use of the horse as a symbol for the wish to run away because the conscious ego can effect a compromise which permits the elaboration of the preconscious wish and abolishes the interference of the instinctual wish. The dangerous aspects of the symbol, "a runaway horse," are transformed through defense, the horse loses his quality as a representative of instinctual urges and acquires other qualities which we attribute to the ego. When the horse has, in this way, been made compatible with Kafka's own ego, the creative imagination is free to elaborate the preconscious wish of the dream. The horse is now the representative of the ego and is employed for a fantasy based on Kafka's conflict about his coming engagement.

We see that the conscious ego has great advantages over the dreamer's ego in warding off danger. We know that in sleep there is a redistribution of psychic energy which accounts for the increase in the strength of id impulses which push upwards and a corresponding decrease in the energy which serves repression. The dreamwork, too, achieves compromises and disguises which insure the continuation of sleep but when impulses of an intolerable strength are liberated in the course of sleep the ego may be unable to deal with them in any other way except to break off sleep. But the conscious ego is far better able to deal with such conflicts. First of all, the shift from sleeping to waking is accompanied by a shift in energy, so that the instinctual impulses which disturbed the sleep are deprived of the powerful reinforcements which they obtained in sleep, while the ego regains the energy of which it was divested in sleep. Second, the conscious ego is equipped so that it can regulate the relationships between mental systems and permit the amount of gratification and the degree and kind of restriction that is compatible with reality and con-

science. And this, I believe, is the reason why Kafka could write stories when he could not sleep, why he needed to dream while awake, why many of his stories are the sequels to unfinished dreams. The dream thoughts in such instances could be completed only when the conscious ego could exercise control over their destinies.

In analyzing this sketch and reconstructing the motives for the dream production and the story, I have not intended, of course, to leave the impression that Kafka deliberately and consciously employed these mechanisms to achieve his story. Nor do I think he became aware of the deeper significance of his horse symbol and consciously effected its disguise. While writing is a conscious act, the elaboration of a fantasy is to a large degree the product of preconscious mental activity. If, for example, the deeper significance of the white horse were to become known to Kafka in the course of his fantasizing, this knowledge would inhibit the elaboration of the fantasy, and the pleasure gain through disguise would be lost. It is usually only upon reflection and following the production of a fantasy that some hidden (but not repressed) elements of a fantasy can be identified by their author. This is why Kafka could say some months after the writing of the Doorkeeper Legend, and while he was visiting with F.B., that "the significance of the story dawned upon me for the first time. . . ." (He does not tell us, however, what he thought the story signified.)

The mental processes through which the white horse fantasy was achieved could not have been known to Kafka. *Why* the white horse should be docile and well-behaved is a matter of no concern to Kafka or any writer. He needs to be that way or there cannot be a story.

We have seen, then, that Kafka's story of the white horse is an elaboration of one of the wish motives of the dream, the preconscious wish to escape. The story can be regarded as "an association" to the dream, in that the dreamer, now awake, finds a connection between one of the elements of the dream and an event in current experience or the remembered past. The repressed motive of the dream does not become conscious and is not manifest in the story except through defense, in which case

the original wish is transformed into its opposite, and its identity would be concealed from its author. (I want to emphasize that Kafka was probably not more capable than other men in making conscious the repressed portions of his dreams and utilizing them in a fresh composition.) The preconscious wish "to escape" could be elaborated in a conscious fantasy although it was withdrawn from elaboration in a dream, an accomplishment which we attribute to the conscious ego. For the conscious ego could abolish the interference of the instinctual wish through defensive measures which the dreamer lacked

THE DREAM OF THE LETTER AND THE MERCHANT MESSNER SKETCH

In the diary entry for November 24, 1913 (also during the period of struggle against marriage with F.B.), Kafka records a dream which is followed by a story in which certain elements of the dream are employed.

The dream: I am sitting in the garden of a sanatorium at a long table, at the very head, and in the dream I actually see my back. It is a gloomy day, I must have gone on a trip and am in an automobile that arrived a short time ago, driving up in a curve to the front of the platform. They are just about to bring in the food when I see one of the waitresses, a young delicate girl wearing a dress the color of autumn leaves, approaching with a very light or unsteady step through the pillared hall that served as the porch of the sanatorium, and going down into the garden. I don't yet know what she wants but nevertheless point questioningly at myself to learn whether she wants me. And in fact she brings me a letter. But I open it and a great number of thin sheets covered with writing come out, all of them in the strange handwriting. I think, this can't be the letter I'm expecting, it is a very thin letter and a strange, thin, unsure handwriting. I begin to read, leaf through the pages and recognize that it must be a very important letter and apparently from F.'s youngest sister. I eagerly begin to read, then my neighbor on the right, I don't know whether man or woman, probably a child, looks down over my arm at the letter. I scream, "No!" The round table of nervous people begins to

tremble. I have probably caused a disaster. I attempt to apologize with a few hasty words in order to go on with the reading. I bend over my letter again, only to wake up without resistance, as if awakened by my own scream. With complete awareness I force myself to fall asleep again, the scene reappears, in fact I quickly read two or three more misty lines of the letter, nothing of which I remember, and lose the dream in further sleep.

The story: In the story which follows the dream entry in the diary, the dream details of "a message" and "an interruption" are brought together again. Following is a summary of the sketch: The old merchant Messner, laboriously ascending the stairs to his room, is confronted by a young man who has stationed himself in a dark corner. The merchant "still groaning from the exertion of his climb" demands to know who this is and what he wants. The young man introduces himself as a student named Kette. He has come to deliver a message to the merchant. The student wishes to discuss the message in Messner's room. Messner obstinately refuses. "I do not receive guests at night." If the student wishes to give him the message he can give it now, in the hall. The student protests. The merchant dismisses him curtly. He is not interested in the message. "Every message that I am spared is a gain. I am not curious." He enters his room, locks the door upon the protesting Kette. A moment later there is a persistent knocking on the door. "The knocking came the way children at play scatter their knocks over the whole door, now down low, dull against the wood, now up high, clear against the glass." The merchant approaches the door a stick in hand. "Is anyone still out there?" "Yes. Please open the door for me." Messner opens the door and advances toward the student with his stick. "Don't hit me," the student warns him. "Then go!" The merchant points his finger at the stair. "But I can't," said the student and ran up to Messner so surprisingly. . . . The story breaks off here, just as the dream breaks off at the point, "I have probably caused a disaster" and with the dreamer's hasty apology.

Certain elements of the dream reappear in the story. In the dream someone, "probably a child," interrupts the reading of the important message, invades the privacy of the dreamer through

spying upon the letter. In the story a young student interrupts the old man, creates a disturbance late at night, disturbs the privacy of the merchant. The connection between the child in the dream and the student is further suggested by the knocking on the door in the story which is likened to the knocking of children at play. The antagonists in the dream, the dreamer and a child, become the merchant Messner and the student Kette. The "merchant" is a familiar character in Kafka's writings. He is Kafka's merchant father. Kette, chain, might signify the bond which tied Kafka to his father. (See also Kafka's own analysis of the name Georg Bendeman in *The Verdict* in which he identifies Bende with bonds, the bonds between father and son. *Diaries*, I, p. 278.) The symbolism becomes clear. The chain, the bonds which tie father and son cannot be severed. Here the link to F.B. in the dream is seen, for Kafka himself understood and explicitly stated in his diaries and his own analysis of *The Verdict* that it was the tie between himself and his father which made marriage with F.B. impossible.

The message in the dream is contained in the letter, but it is a message which is not received, so to speak, because of the interruption. When the dreamer returns to it after waking he can read a few more "misty lines," none of which he remembers, then loses the dream in further sleep. In the story, too, the message is never delivered. The merchant does not want to hear it. (In both instances the nature of the message is not known.) The letter, the message, seem to belong to the group of "lost communication" symbols in Kafka's writing which were mentioned earlier, and are analogous, particularly, to the telephones in *The Castle*. They are failures in human connections, of course, here represented in the dream by the symbol of a letter from a woman and in the story by the message for the man. His life conflict is delineated in these terms. He cannot receive a woman's love (he cannot read the letter in the dream) and he cannot give his love to a man (the thwarted message for Messner in the story).

In examining the connections between the dream and the story we should give our attention to those details which are most highly charged with feeling. In the dream it is the interruption, the invasion of privacy and the "no" which create anxiety in the

dreamer. These details must be highly overdetermined in the dream with threads leading to the dream day and current experience and other threads leading back to infantile experience. It is possible that these details represent (among many other things) the conflict over marriage which was uppermost in Kafka's thoughts during this period. For Kafka saw marriage as an invasion of his privacy, "then I'll never be alone again," and an interference with his writing, "But then would it not be at the expense of my writing? Not that, not that!" (Both quotations are from his "Summary of all the arguments for and against my marriage," July 21, 1913.) But also he desired this marriage and in his list of arguments there is one in favor of marriage, "Inability to bear life alone." I think, then, that these thoughts made their way into the dream details. He is "eager" to read the letter which has a connection with F. but "someone" interferes, invades his privacy, and his cry of "no!" is the vehement protest against marriage, the invasion of his privacy, the interference with his work.

But these interpretations would account only for those motives in the dream which are provided by a current conflict. These details must also have threads which lead back into infantile experience. In an early draft of this paper I attempted to reconstruct a childhood memory from these details which I could not support on any basis except clinical experience in dream interpretation. While such tentative constructions are allowable in psychoanalytic investigation the test of validation is provided by the live patient or subject of the investigation, i.e., the patient will confirm or not confirm the analyst's construction. In this case, it seemed, the subject of my investigation could never offer the necessary confirmation. His diaries and recollections provided me with nothing more specific for my purposes, and while I thought I found evidence in certain of his writings, the use of imaginative works for "evidence" could bring forth the same criticism as the use of dream details for "evidence." We still don't know if it really happened. So, in this earlier draft I wrote in a tentative construction based on these dream details which read as follows: "The details in the dream suggest a crisis in childhood, an interruption by a child, an invasion of privacy, and a severe prohibition represented

by the 'no!'—an early disaster which caused a small child to tremble in fear." (In the dream reversal "the round table of nervous people began to tremble.") I could not pursue this further and I was also bothered by the fact that the connecting links between the dream details, my reconstruction, and the Messner-Kette story could not be clearly established.

Last year the text of Kafka's "Letter to My Father" was published in full for the first time. In a long outpouring of old griefs and reproaches there is one memory to which Kafka himself attached the greatest importance and which provided unexpected confirmation of my construction and the connecting links between the dream and the Messner-Kette story.

There is only one episode in the early years of which I have a direct memory. You may remember it, too. Once in the night I kept on whimpering for water, not, I am certain, because I was thirsty, but probably partly to be annoying, partly to amuse myself. After several vigorous threats had failed to have any effect, you took me out of bed, carried me out onto the *pavlatche* (a balcony) and left me there alone for a while in my nightshirt, outside the shut door. I am not going to say this was wrong—perhaps at the time there was really no other way of getting peace and quiet that night—but I mention it as typical of your methods of bringing up a child and their effect on me. I dare say I was quite obedient afterwards at that period, but it did me inner harm. What was for me a matter of course, that senseless asking for water, and the extraordinary terror of being carried outside, were two things that I, my nature being what it was, could never properly connect with each other. Even years afterwards I suffered from the tormenting fancy that the huge man, my father, the ultimate authority, would come almost for no reason at all and take me out of bed in the night and carry me out onto the *pavlatche*, and that therefore I was such a mere nothing for him.

This memory has made its way into the dream and the story. I would like to propose from the evidence of Kafka's recorded dreams and his stories that this experience was not the only one in which he disturbed his father at night with disastrous consequences, for the theme of sexual observation occurs repeatedly in Kafka's dreams and his writings. But he is probably truthful in saying that this episode is the only one of his early years of which

he has a direct memory, for such infantile sexual scenes as I have inferred from the material ordinarily undergo repression. It is even probable that Kafka's memory of the disturbance at night which he describes obtained its dreadful proportions in his child's eyes from an earlier interruption the memory of which was repressed. We would then regard the memory which was retained in consciousness as a screen memory, that is, certain qualities of the repressed experience are displaced onto the later, more innocent interruption at night, the one that survives in memory.

But for our purposes here we can work best with the memory which Kafka has given us, the crisis at night which led to the forceful eviction of a small boy and the punishment of being locked out on a balcony. For it is very clear that Kafka has written into the Messner-Kette story the scene of this childhood calamity, the disturbance at night which provoked his father's anger. The details are there: the interruption at night, the student's plea to be heard, to deliver the message, the merchant's angry refusal, the locking out of the intruder, the persistent demands of the student, the menacing reappearance of the merchant, with the command to leave and the student's last protest. With very few changes the story of the childhood crisis is retold. The conflict between a small boy and his father becomes a conflict between two strangers, an older man and a student, aptly named Messner and Kette. It is a compact statement of the idea that the conflict between father and son persists unchanged in the adult years of the son. The story is unfinished. It breaks off when the merchant commands the student to leave. "'But I can't,' said the student and ran up to Messner so surprisingly. . . ." We are reminded of the dream now which ends abruptly at the point, "I have probably caused a disaster," and with the dreamer's hasty apology.

Now I think we can understand the relationship between the dream of the letter and the story. It is as if the dreamer takes up the problem of the dream in the waking state, searches for its meaning, and comes up with a memory, an association to one of the dream elements. It is probable that the dream details of the interruption by the child, the cry "No!" and the observation, "I have probably caused a disaster," those details which are highly

charged with feeling, lead the dreamer's waking associations back to the event in childhood. The story then makes use of the memory, recasts and resets it as the encounter between the merchant Messner and the student Kette.

But then we need to ask, "What is the motive in *writing* the story, or, more exactly, in putting this memory into the form of a story?" By doing this Kafka attempts to get rid of the painful effects of this memory through repetition, through experiencing it once again in order to overcome it. He gives the childhood event a second existence in the story. The original conflict led to disaster because the antagonists were a small boy and his powerful father. In the new edition he tries out the event once again with the antagonists a young man and an old and wheezing merchant as if this time there might be hope for a different outcome. But the young man is defeated by the old man once again as if the problem can find no solution in the imagination either.

We have seen the connections between details in the dream, a memory, and a story, but in reading the story of Messner-Kette we feel that in the process of reworking these details into a story something got lost. There is an emptiness in this story which we cannot immediately account for when we consider its source in a dream and a memory which were highly charged with emotion. Now the effect of this story is certainly intended by Kafka; it is satirical, absurd, and its author is saying, Here is a spectacle for you! A young man and an aging man are like a small boy and his father, but the old man still has his power and the young man is still a weakling, a child who whimpers at night outside his father's room. But even the irony is weakened in this story by the absence of any emotional quality.

It seems that in the process of utilizing a dream detail and a memory in a story the ideational content was preserved but the emotional content was lost. We have already mentioned as one of the advantages of a conscious fantasy over a dream that the conscious ego can control the quantities of affect and can admit into consciousness only those quantities which can be tolerated. It is even possible for the ego to permit a fantasy or a memory to emerge into consciousness while its accompanying affects are

held back by the repressive mechanisms. In this way once painful memories appear in consciousness as empty or disembodied images, ghosts of themselves which hold no real terror because they are not alive, are not animated by the original full charge of energy. Similarly, the grossest, the most naked sensual fantasies can be admitted to conscious expression if they are deprived of their accompanying affects. The quality of the mental production is then altered accordingly so that the fantasy seems dead, unreal.

Now this is a quality which appears very strongly in Kafka's writings. Think of the torture in "In the Penal Colony," the scene, "The Whippers," in *The Trial*. The detachment which accompanies these descriptions is the mental quality of the writer who admitted these awful visions into consciousness by making them silent, by anesthetizing the vital parts. Only in this way could he confront his specters without dread. Kafka's people, the people of his stories, are the product of this emotional isolation. They do not live, they imitate the living. They are human abstractions and abstractions of human qualities exactly as dream people are. We could never believe in Kafka's people if we did not take them as dream people and accept Kafka's world as a dream world.

From these ideas on the defenses against affect which Kafka employed in his writing I think I can also deduce the reasons why so many of his stories are unfinished. Frequently Kafka's stories and sketches break off at the critical moment, as a dream breaks off when a signal of danger occurs. It seems probable to me that at those points in Kafka's stories where a strong emotion threatens to break through the defenses, the story breaks off. We never find out what it was that the student Kette was about to do or say at the critical point in the Messner-Kette story. The story breaks off just as the dream breaks off and this may be for the same reasons.

4

In these examples we see how the story takes up the problem of the dream, how the latent dream thoughts are transformed in

the waking state and worked into a new composition. The story stands in the same relationship to the dream as a dreamer's waking associations to his dream and its elements can be regarded as associations to the dream. There is this difference, of course: ordinarily when a man pursues his thoughts in relation to a dream, these thoughts, if they are free associations, will emerge in a formless, chaotic stream. Now Kafka does bind these disordered elements together in a narrative, but the narrative is as indifferent to the conventions of storytelling as is the manifest dream. The comparison between these two should be closely examined. The latent dream thoughts are themselves disordered fragments and what we call the manifest dream, the "story" of the dream is the attempt on the part of the dreamwork to give a semblance of order and coherence to materials which have no logical connections and are governed by primitive thought processes. Freud called this aspect of the dreamwork "secondary elaboration." The resulting "story" in the dream when considered as a composition is loosely and often indifferently strung together in a narrative which combines its elements without regard for compatibility, temporal sequence or the boundaries of space. (While many dreams do present an intelligible façade, when we say "like a dream" we usually mean the disordered dream, the absurd dream.)

Kafka's stories in the examples studied here are associations to the dream and are also composed like the dream. The so-called "dream technique" is like the dream's own method of composition, the process of secondary elaboration. There is no doubt that Kafka deliberately employed this device of the dream for reproducing the effect of the dream in his stories. But I think it is also true, as I mentioned earlier, that his gift in re-creating the dream world in his stories derived from illness. I want to emphasize that I do not think Kafka was psychotic, but the danger of psychosis was very real, probably as real as he feared. He never actually lost touch with reality, never lost his citizenship in the real world even when he pronounced himself "a citizen of this other world." His writing must be considered as his strongest bond to the real world and may even be responsible for maintaining his contact with reality.

I think I can support this last statement from certain remarks of Kafka regarding the conditions under which he wrote. If it were not for the sleepless nights he would not write at all, he says. (This should not be taken literally, of course, but it is a fact that most of his writing was the work of these sleepless nights and we have seen the close connection between these nocturnal fantasies and the anxiety dreams which he warded off through insomnia.) He himself connects his fear of sleep and his fear of death. "Perhaps I am afraid that the soul—which in sleep leaves me—will never return." In psychological terms, he is afraid of sleep because in sleep he loses the self, or awareness of self, and there is the danger that he may not recover it. This is a common fear in severe neuroses, where the danger of losing the self and the ties to reality is real. This extreme peril to the ego gives rise in many serious neuroses (and psychoses as well) to creative spells in which the ego attempts to counteract the loosening of its bonds to reality by energetically recreating aspects of the objective world. (Ernst Kris develops this psychoanalytic idea in his *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art*, a group of brilliant essays dealing with the phenomenon of restitution in art.) But the restitutive function of art is not confined to morbid states and I feel that I am doing this psychoanalytic theory an injustice by introducing it in this context. In Kafka's case, however, we need the clinical observations on restitution in order to explain the function of writing in his neurosis. Only one who is in great danger of losing the self and the real world will fear sleep as Kafka did. This explains why Kafka wrote only of himself. He needed to affirm and reaffirm his uncertain existence in the real world through creating images of himself, through giving himself an existence on paper. In this way his writing preserved his ties to reality.

The problem of art and neurosis is often brought in irrelevantly to the study of a work. In Kafka's writing the problem is not only relevant but it intrudes itself into the study of his works. We cannot understand his writing without understanding him, and this must be counted as a failure in the work. The ambiguity of his writing has given rise to a Kafka criticism in which the works have stimulated impressions and fantasies like the inkblots on the

Rorschach test. With the publication in recent years of the Kafka notebooks, letters, conversations and miscellaneous pieces, Kafka as Mystic, Kafka as Cabalist, Kafka as Prophet, Kafka as Social Critic, and a large number of other Kafkas have receded and we are left to read Kafka as Joseph K. and as Gregor Samsa, a man who had less to say about the world he lived in than about the world that lived in him.

Kafka offers himself and his disease as a symbol which exercises an extraordinary attraction in our time. For mental illness is the romantic disease of this age just as tuberculosis was in the past century. His writing is expiation, atonement, an extreme mortification before his human judges, and the bond he creates between himself and his reader is in part the bond of guilt, of unconscious sin. But this does not account for his vogue during the past twenty years. The awe and mysticism which surrounds the figure of Kafka and his writings bring to mind those feelings which are aroused in us by a premonitory dream. When the events of the dream or of inner life are reproduced in the world of reality we are inclined to endow both the dream and the dreamer with magical and divine qualities. The events of our recent history have appeared to us like the full-scale performance of Kafka's tormented dreams. The peril to our reason has given a significance to Kafka's writings which, we must grant, was not altogether his intention.

Kafka appears, finally, as a crippled writer, a man in whom the disease and the art were united in a kind of morbid love so that neither could set the other free. "*Die Kunst ist für den Künstler ein Leid, durch das er sich für ein neues Leid befreit,*" he said. His writing represented, among other things, an attempt to free himself from neurotic suffering, to repeat and to relive it in order to conquer it. But behind each door with Kafka there was another door, as in the imagery of the legend "Before the Law." An unending chain of events led backward into earliest times and the conquest of danger and of suffering was a succession of battles in which a new enemy grew in the spot of the last one vanquished, and the new enemy was only a replica of the one who came before.

The disease which produced extraordinary dreams exerted its morbid influence on the creative process as well. The striving for synthesis, for integration and harmony which are the marks of a healthy ego and a healthy art are lacking in Kafka's life and in his writings. The conflict is weak in Kafka's stories because the ego is submissive; the unequal forces within the Kafka psyche create no tension within the reader, only a fraternal sadness, an identification between a writer and reader which takes place in the most solitary regions of the ego.

¹ Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV.

² For another treatment of the "uncanny" in Kafka's writing, see M. B. Hecht, "Uncanniness, Yearning and Franz Kafka's Works," *Imago* (April, 1952).

MARIE BONAPARTE

Poe and the Function of Literature

BEFORE EMBARKING ON our analysis of Poe's tales, we wrote: "Works of art or literature profoundly reveal their creators' psychology and, as Freud has shown, their construction resembles that of our dreams. The same mechanisms which, in dreams or nightmares, govern the manner in which our strongest, though most carefully concealed desires are elaborated, desires which often are the most repugnant to consciousness, also govern the elaboration of the work of art." Freud, in *The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming*¹ has demonstrated the links which bind the daydreams of adolescents or adults—so nearly related to the dreams of the night—to the play activities of children; both being fictive fulfillments of wishes. There, too, Freud shows how daydreams and creative writing resemble each other, since the latter gratifies the artist's deepest infantile, archaic and unconscious wishes in imaginary and, more or less, disguised form. Literary works might thus be ranged according to a scale of subjectivity. At one extreme, we should find the writings of a Maupassant or Zola, works written almost impersonally, as it were, in which the author is a spectator merely recording the panorama of existence:

such, so to speak, would be works of "viewers" of genius, resembling certain unusual forms of daydreaming, however different, at first sight, they might seem from the average night or day dream. In every case, however, we should have to determine the extent to which the author's personality, split into psychic elements seeking to embody themselves in different characters, permits the author to re-embody himself in each of the characters observed. So, too, in mythological subjects, which would seem a source of external inspiration to the dramatist or poet, and which represent humanity's collective phylogenetic daydreams, an author's ontogenetic complexes will always seek ways of expression in the choice of theme and its elaboration.

It is thus possible, through infinite gradations, to pass from what appear purely objective works to others altogether subjective, which last would seem the original form of creative writing. In this latter the author's complexes, more or less masked, project themselves into the work.

It is works that are wholly subjective, loaded with their creator's unconscious memories or, as we would say, with his complexes, which resemble not only adolescent daydreams but even the night dreams of man. Thus, at one end of our scale we might place the works of a Poe or Hoffmann which not only resemble the dream in the fashion they are elaborated, but often reproduce the shape and construction of our nightmares. Moreover, addiction to drugs doubtless played its part in the creations of both men.

The deep infantile sources from which Poe's inspiration was drawn has, we trust, been made clear in the earlier portions of this study. It now remains for us to show, as in Poe's tales, what psychic mechanisms, as such, generally govern the manner in which works of literature are elaborated.

In his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, that foundation stone of modern psychology, the only psychology worth the name, that which probes the unconscious, Freud, concluding his chapter on dream elaboration, wrote:

It (the Dream-Work) may be exhaustively described if we do not lose sight of the conditions which its product must satisfy.

This product, the dream, has above all to be withdrawn from the censorship, and to this end the dreamwork makes use of the *displacement of psychic intensities*, even to the transvaluation of all psychic values; thoughts must be exclusively or predominantly reproduced in the material of visual and acoustic memory-traces, and from this requirement there proceeds the *regard of the dream-work for representability*, which it satisfies by fresh displacements. Greater intensities have (probably) to be produced than are at the disposal of the night dream-thoughts, and this purpose is served by the extensive *condensation* to which the constituents of the dream-thoughts are subjected. Little attention is paid to the logical relations of the thought-material; they ultimately find a veiled representation in the *formal* peculiarities of the dream. The *affects* of the dream-thoughts undergo slighter alterations than their conceptual content. As a rule, they are suppressed; where they are preserved, they are freed from the concepts and combined in accordance with their similarity. Only one part of the dream-work—the revision, variable in amount, which is effected by the partially awakened conscious thought—is at all consistent with the conception which the writers on the subject have endeavoured to extend to the whole performance of dream-formation.²

Starting from this résumé of the conditions which must be satisfied by the dream product and which imply the processes which govern its formation, we shall see that these processes, in varying aspects and degrees, are identical with those by which the unconscious content of a literary work, using preconscious thought as a between-stage, is able to pass into the conscious product of the written work. We shall find nothing to surprise us in this fact, since these mechanisms and laws are none other than those which universally govern the human psyche.

Before, however, we study the diverse processes which govern the elaboration of a literary work, let us seek to formulate a more precise idea of the different psychic states to which we have referred.

What are we to understand, firstly, by unconscious memories, representations or affects which, let there be no mistake, denote happenings which pass totally unperceived or even suspected by consciousness? Our earliest infantile memories always remain in this condition, as do the representations associated with them. They

thus form, with the atavistic sum total of our instincts, the nucleus of what we term the unconscious, from which only their unconscious *affects* succeed in emerging into the preconscious, though displaced on other objects. Thus, it is, that our infantile unconscious continues to govern our lives by imposing its choice of those representations most fitted to effect such displacements.

Preconscious representations may be described as those which, though generally unconscious, may nevertheless emerge into consciousness given suitable occasion. Thus, in effect, we distinguish between two types of unconscious; on one hand the unconscious proper which can never be brought to the surface, composed of the original storehouse of our instincts and earliest infantile experiences and, on the other, the preconscious compounded of later memories and representations which, though generally unconscious may, under favoring conditions, be brought into consciousness.

As for consciousness, its part is very limited, although psychology once included every psychic function in this category. It would appear to be merely our capacity for apperception but, here, turned inward to happenings in the psyche. And, just as our capacity for external perception, via the senses, can only perceive phenomena without probing their essence, so our faculty of inner perception can only observe surface movements and gleams of happenings in the inaccessible depths of our unconscious. Thus our conscious ego is never but the more or less watchful spectator of ourselves.

When dreams or literary works are elaborated what generally happens, as indeed with all our psychic products, is that first there has been an external perception. During the day however, our attention, to adapt us to reality, requires us to move from object to object. Thus, the beginnings and ends of certain trains of association, during the day, sink into the preconscious. There they continue until their affect is dispersed and vanishes. But, also, they may encounter a link which, by association with some unconscious memory, leads to the unconscious. The entire preconscious chain of associations is then swept into the unconscious and are charged with the incomparable energy inherent in archaic repressed affects which remain resistant to time, because to consciousness. Reinforced by this affect, they then emerge into consciousness as a

night or day dream. It is when this "sinking into the unconscious" takes place and before they emerge in new guise, that the preconscious thoughts are subjected to the curious processes, processes very different from those of logical thought, which we shall now consider.

But before we do so, a further remark is necessary. Although language forces us to speak of *sinking* into the unconscious and passing from the unconscious to the preconscious, we must beware of imagining unconscious, preconscious or conscious as localized regions of the psyche, for they are but diverse *conditions* of the latter.

By sinking into the unconscious, thought pictures (representations) are, firstly, able to *lose* their affect, which then slips on to more or less allied representations. Examples of such *displacement of psychic intensity* are so numerous that they constitute, so to speak, the warp and woof of the writer's fabric. To mention only the most striking: in the series of tales of the "Live-in-Death Mother," for instance, displacement is generally confined to transferring the predominant affect, originally attached to the mother, to the imaginary figures endowed with the attributes which pertained to the dead woman. Berenice, Morella, Ligeia, Madeline, are as morbid, as evanescent as advanced consumptives, while their sylphlike motions seem, already, to exhale an odor of decay. Nevertheless, this simple displacement served to keep Poe ignorant, as for almost a century his readers, that these ailing sylphs were but forms of Elizabeth Arnold. At the most, it was sometimes guessed that Virginia might be a surrogate of Elizabeth.

With *The Fall of the House of Usher*, however, a greater degree of displacement strikes us. There, the "Live-in-Death Mother" is represented not only by Madeline's human form but as a building; a house whose walls, whose atmosphere, breathe putrefaction. To effect this gross displacement, Poe employs one of man's universal symbols; that which represents a woman as a building.

In *Metzengerstein*, the Mother is represented, totemically, by a horse. It is on this that the incestuous libidinal emphasis, which originally belonged to the mother, is displaced. Who ever would

have found his way through all this but for the keys, the laws, revealed by Freud in his *The Interpretation of Dreams*? Intellectually that is, for it is just because our unconscious so well recognizes, under the strangeness of the manifest tale, the depth and reality of the tragedy latently enacted, that each of Poe's stories stirs our instincts so deeply, however puerile they at times seem.

With the tales of the "Mother-as-Landscape," the displacement of psychic intensities manifests itself in ever more forms and on a yet vaster scale. Our primary bent, to absorb the universe narcissistically, enables the libido with which we invest objects to attach itself to all our senses perceive, however microscopic or large; the seas, the earth's depths, the stars. Thus the mother, the first object we learn to differentiate from ourselves, is represented in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* not only by ships, or the strange white totem animal *Tekeli-li*, but also by the ocean, one of her universal symbols.

Again, in the burial phantasy of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* and more, even, of *The Gold Bug*, the earth also symbolizes the mother and, its "bowels," her bowels or womb. In its turn, too, in *The Unparalleled Adventures of one Hans Pfaall*, the pale, cold moon represents the mother, while the son's yearning for these symbolic mothers is revealed in the passion with which Poe's various heroes seek to explore and win the earth, the sky, the seas. In Poe's three sea stories, the sea yawns into vast funnels down which the son precipitously returns to the place wherefrom he issued.

In that strange tale, *Loss of Breath*, with its indirect confession of Poe's impotence, it will not surprise us to discover many and varied instances of such displacements. The basic displacement here is that whereby affect is transferred from the natural concern felt by all men in connection with their sexual potency, to a concern for lungs and breath. Here, too, Poe has resorted to one of humanity's consecrated symbols, for many theogonies attribute creative powers to their deities' divine breath. It would be beyond our scope to recall here all the displacements with which this tale abounds. The first "guilty" aggressive sex attack by Mr. Lacko'-breath was, as we saw, replaced by verbal aggression which resulted

in his punishment; namely, the loss of breath inflicted by the castrating father in shape of Mr. Windenough; his being crushed by the fat gentleman in the diligence; his being dismembered by the surgeon and, again, his being perforated by the undertaker's screw; all, so many variants of the same theme. On the other hand, he is *rephallized* in the form of hanging. And erection is depicted by an endless swelling of the hero's body after he is hanged. Thus, the libidinal emphasis properly attached to the phallus is displaced on this swelling, which now appears as anxiety and the antithesis of the pleasures so much feared by Poe. Perhaps the only *motif* which appears almost unchanged is that of Elizabeth Arnold's "guilty" love letters, doubtless, because thus *isolated* in a distorted context, they seemed sufficiently disguised. This whole tale, which confesses Poe's tragedy, his impotence, is characterized by its reversed affect: it is a tragedy masquerading as burlesque. Representation by opposite, by which we disguise what we dare not openly express—which device we shall later discuss—dominates this tale. Nor is it by chance that even *rephallization* is represented, ironically, by a limp, dangling body.

In the tales of the "Murdered Mother," displacement of affect is clearly revealed. The slayer-father, as imaged in the infantile sadistic concept of coitus, here appears as the mysterious unknown, the "Man of the Crowd," "type and genius of profound crime" as, also, in the orangutan of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. In one case, a dagger symbolizes the piercing phallus; in the other, a razor. There is displacement, too, in the locked room of the Rue Morgue—which represents the mother as much as does old Madame L'Espanaye—and displacement once more in the chimney, which figures the maternal *cloaca* into which the daughter is thrust. Further displacements are the gouged-out eye of *The Black Cat* symbolizing the castration wound, the cat's *rephallization* in the form of hanging, and the cat as widespread symbol of woman and her genital organs.

In the tales of "Revolt against the Father," the psychic emphasis properly attached to the phallus is attached to *The Tell-Tale Heart*, while that in *The Cask of Amontillado*, proper to the maternal bowels, is shifted upon Montresor's vaults. Indeed, all representa-

tions by courtiers, princes or kings, of the parents we knew as children, as in *Hop-Frog* or *The Red Death*, are so many displacements designed to render them unrecognizable for what they are, so that, unsuspecting, they may play their "guilty," libidinal parts.

The Devil who bets and wins Mr. Dammit's head, and the symbolic bridge which beheads him with its iron bracings were, as we saw, displacements first of the avenging father and then, of the danger-fraught vagina with its imaginary, fearsome teeth. Innumerable are the displacements which went to construct *The Pit and the Pendulum* nightmare. The cell as the contractile womb of the mother, the vaginal pit, and the penis-scythe of Time, are but the most striking. Finally, what shall we say of the sidereal displacements of that androgynous system *Eureka* or of its God who, like all great deities, is a displacement of the father on infinity; or, of the primal ejaculation of that God; or again, of the Particle Proper, that first spermatozoon from which, through irradiation or cellular fission, the Universe, child of God, was born?

But here we must interrupt our recital of these examples of displacement in the stories we have analyzed. To instance them all would be almost to rewrite this book.

Of all the devices employed by the dreamwork, that of the *displacement of psychic intensities*—apart from one exception—is the most freely used in the elaboration of works of art, doubtless because such displacement is generally dictated by the moral censor, which is more active in our waking thoughts than in sleep. The conceiving and writing of literary works are conscious activities, and the less the author guesses of the hidden themes in his works, the likelier are they to be truly creative.

The moral censor, as we see, employs displacement to veil from authors, as from dreamers, the nature of the instincts which dreams, or works of art, reveal. But there is yet another condition which creative work must satisfy, namely, *regard for representability*, although in less degree than is required by dreams or the plastic arts. This *regard for representability*, as Freud wrote in the passage earlier quoted, leads to fresh displacements which, in dreams, attach themselves to latent elements too abstract to fulfill the regard

for representability needed to create dreams. Yet, in literature, we frequently find chains of abstract thought which would, with difficulty, find their way into dreams—as, for instance, Dupin's reasoning at the beginning of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* or Legrand's deductions in *The Gold Bug*. The dream, for instance, in the former, would have represented the comparison of the "ingenious" chess player with the more "analytic" whist player by simultaneously, or successively, presenting people playing whist and chess, the superiority of the whist players being conveyed in a final presentation of the latter. Nevertheless, the tendency to replace abstract concepts by sensory images, mainly visual, is apparent even in the elaboration of imaginative works. The appearance of *The Red Death* in Prince Prospero's palace, intended to represent the invading epidemic, is depicted by the entrance of a masked, blood-spattered, human form which strikingly and, visually, characterizes the plague's symptoms. The *Angel of the Odd* also, in its way, "visualizes" unconscious memories of the real fluid nourishment the child absorbed from its mother. Also, by a process of *condensation* which we shall soon meet again, the story similarly "visualizes" the wish for other imagined excreted bodily foods which the child, later, wished to receive from the father who, then, had become the love object. One of the substitutes, later, for this food, in the unconscious, is drinking with bosom cronies. All this, which could not be said directly, is visually expressed by the Angel's appearance—a creature composed of bottles and kegs of nourishing fluids, which it lavishes on the narrator while belaboring him with blows. Thus it recalls Poe's upbringing by John Allan.

In *Metzengerstein*, the son's incestuous union with the mother is magnificently visualized in the rider's mad rush while glued to his inseparable, symbolic charger. In *The Descent into the Maelstrom*, the return to the womb has all the immensity of a vertiginous plunge into the ocean's yawning chasm. Similar examples of intensely visualized displacements can be endlessly found, and described, in Poe's tales.

But here we shall pause to turn to another problem, observing that, of the four kinds of displacement mentioned as needed to

fulfill the regard for representability, three are direct representations of the human body or certain of its parts.

May not, also, the first example, the plague figured as *The Masque of the Red Death*, be traced back to a human prototype? For the masker who sows the pestilence or Red Death is, as we saw, identical with the murdered Oedipal father who, by the talion law returns, in his turn, to become the slayer.

The other displacements with which we first dealt, resulting from the behests of the moral censor, also mostly end by representing human beings in one shape or other. These generally human symbols, invariably derived from the human body, we have throughout found enlisted in the service of the displacement mechanism made necessary by the moral censor.

To the reader, our analyses may at times have seemed overmuch to stress these symbolic devices which, monotonously, bring everything in the universe back to the same human prototypes—father, mother, child, our members and organs and, in particular, the genitals. The fault, however, is not ours. We cannot help it that the unconscious monotonously reiterates certain themes, governed as it is by our most primitive memories and our most archaic instincts.

Now, of the two great instincts that govern our lives, hunger and love, hunger is much the less *psychological*, doubtless because the nutritive instinct is only in slight degree "compressible." He who eats not, dies! This imperative instinct thus demands to be more or less satisfied and, as a result, has small opportunity to provide psychic substitutes for itself. But what turns the libidinal instinct, the libido, into the *psychological* instinct *in excelsis*, that whose derivatives and substitutes engage the whole psyche, is not only its compressibility (man, at need, may live without direct satisfaction of his erotism) but doubtless, also, the biological fact that the libido, like the psyche, stands in a specially close relation to the nervous system. So closely interwoven is the erotic instinct, and its dynamics, with other aspects of the psyche, that they seem quite impossible to separate out, as we see from that universal phenomenon sublimation, on which all our civilizations have been raised.

The initial autoerotism of the nursling, with its diffused seekings for gratification, eventually enters a narcissistic phase where the

child takes itself as its first love object. In this phase, the child does not as yet distinguish its own body from the breast which suckles it, nor from the mother's soft, warm body; only later does the mother become its first awareness of the outer world. By degrees its father, brothers and sisters, then the outer world, materialize behind the mother and, under the growing pressure of reality, become accepted by the child. The unconscious, however, finds means to revenge itself for thus being robbed of its omnipotence and the outer world, which destroys our primary, narcissistic illusions is, in its turn, *narcissised* by the unconscious. In this process, the child, ontogenetically similar here to our remote ancestors, passes through an animistic stage whose symbols still rule our souls, whether we be primitives or highly civilized; symbols which, doubtless, are its ineradicable vestige.

Thus it is that symbols for the body, the mother and father, their genitals and ours, through the unconscious and are projected into whatever the psyche produces, whether we sleep or wake. For, as instances from every domain of the spirit show:

we need not assume that any special symbolizing activity of the psyche is operative in dream-formation; . . . on the contrary, the dream makes use of such symbolizations as are to be found ready-made in unconscious thinking, since these, by reason of their ease of representation, and for the most part by reason of their being exempt from the censorship, satisfy more effectively the requirements of dream-formation.³

Symbols succeed in satisfying both the conditions required for displacement; namely, the demands of morality and concreteness. Thus, we find they abound in mythology, art, and religion as, also, in dreams.

Poe's opus which, in any case, comes as near to the dream as is possible for any successfully conceived conscious production, is found to be especially rich in symbols; these help to instill that intense and visual eloquence which communicates direct from the unconscious of one individual to that of another.

Contrary to *displacement*, *condensation*, that other primary mechanism in the elaboration of dreams, appears to be less active

in the elaboration of literary works than of dreams. In particular, it is responsible far less often for those nonsensical products, that seem to defy all logic, which we know as nonsense dreams: products resulting from drastic condensation of convergent and, even, divergent thoughts. That difference, doubtless, inheres in the fact that literary creation is the product of the waking psyche. When we are awake, preconscious and conscious thoughts dominate, with their strivings for logic, and the unconscious is deeply buried. It is only, however, in the unconscious that condensation takes place. The unconscious, alone, is the crucible into which the preconscious thoughts, once they have sunk there, automatically, as it were, form those strange and at times ridiculous amalgams we know as "condensations." It need not surprise us, therefore, to find that Poe's tales, though at times so similar to dream products, show less condensation than our dreams.

Condensation appears when, despite the conscious thought of the tale, deep unconscious processes are at work. Poe's women, with their "supernatural aura" were, as we saw, condensations of many of the women he loved: Berenice, Madeline and Eleonora, especially, reveal characteristics of Virginia his small cousin, as much as of his mother Elizabeth. The Marchesa Aphrodite, in *The Assigination*, with her "statuelike" figure, condenses Mrs. Stanard, Elmira, Frances Allan and Elizabeth Arnold. The Marchese Mentoni, that grim avenger on his palace steps, recalls Judge Stanard and John Allan. Furthermore, the old man in *The Tell-Tale Heart* was shown to condense David Poe, his supposititious successor in Elizabeth's affections and, also, John Allan. Many such instances could be given, were we to seek out, in Poe's works, all those composite figures which—by overdetermination, condensation and the fusion of many people's attributes into one—result in a general underlining of certain characteristics and, so, in the creation of those intense, almost mythical paternal or maternal figures which so strongly affect our minds. In effect, the purpose condensation fulfills is to produce affects more intense than those found in our latent thoughts, to which end it picks up and concentrates the scattered preconscious thoughts as they sink into the unconscious.

Suffice it if we again recall the figure that seems to come at the

end of our scale, that of *The Angel of the Odd*, which condenses the father concept (John Allan and his whippings), the mother (bottle = breasts), and milk (alcohol) as well as various bodily secretions, female or male (again alcohol).

Passing to other types of condensation we find that, though the Marchesa Aphrodite and Poe's other composite figures are built up after "the method employed by Galton in producing family portraits"—by superimposing family likenesses one on another, "so that the common features stand out in stronger relief, while those which do not coincide neutralize one another and become indistinct,"⁴ condensation may also create hippogriffs and chimeras. The fantastic *Tekeli-li* in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, by its cat's head reminds us of the mother and her genitals and, by its whiteness, of her milk. By its scarlet teeth and claws it also reminds us of the cannibal wishes which develop in the child with its growing teeth, and of the talion for its guilty wishes which the child imagines may be exacted by her teeth, or even vagina, in punishment not, now, for its cannibal wishes but for its incestuous desires. As to the long and prominent rat's tail, that doubtless is an offshoot of the *penis* which the child originally attributes to the mother, while the doglike ears of the strange "cat" are perhaps borrowed from Tiger, Pym's dog, with its mother characteristics.

Again, a single manifest element may represent several which remain latent: Mr. Lacko'breath's lost breath, for instance, represents both creative male potency and intestinal flatus. In *The Gold Bug*, the treasure is strongly overdetermined and represents several hidden and implied sets of ideas. First, all the phantasies of real wealth which occupied Poe as the son of poor strolling players and, later, as the disinherited "son" of John Allan, reflect themselves in Captain Kidd's dazzling treasure. But beneath its superficial glamour, deep and unconscious drives lend power and conviction to the treasure theme. The unconscious memory of little Rosalie, born shortly before he visited the Carolina coast for the first time with his mother, and his ruminations on her birth, are what unconsciously inspire Legrand's inductions. As for the buried treasure they reveal, this emerges as a substitute for the infant sister whose sojourn in his mother's womb he had guessed.

The treasure itself, with its gold and precious stones, we saw revealed as symbols of the child's first "gifts"; the feces which, in return for his own "generosity" in yielding his, she will exchange for a similar gift. We may recall in this connection the symbolic maternal animals which in *Peau d'Ane* and so many other legends, excrete gold in place of feces. So too, it was from Frances Allan that Edgar desired these anal gifts, gifts expressed in *The Gold Bug* in the classic, symbolic form of gold and jewels. Yet this gold was not Frances', but John Allan's. When Frances heaped luxuries on her foster son, it was her husband's wealth which allowed her to do so. The child who, at first, had seen only the "mother's" generosity, must soon have seen from a dispute, word, or gesture that the money she spent came, in fact, from the man. Whence the equating of gold with the father's male potency and, so, penis.

Thus, as a result of factors specific to Poe's childhood and early life, the ancient and universal equation *feces = gold = child = penis* declares itself, in this model tale, in the greatly condensed and sole theme of treasure.

Another psychic process however, the opposite, as it were, of condensation, even more frequently manifests itself in creative writing than in dreams; that by which one individual is split into several.

In *Morella*, *Ligeia* and *Eleonora*, the manifest forms of the first wives begin as condensations of the images of Elizabeth and Virginia; they then however split, to represent, separately, once more distinct from each other, the two images originally separate in the latent thought of the tale. The process to which we allude is thus only apparently at work, for the second act, which restores the second Morella, Rowena, or Ermengarde, merely resolves the earlier condensation.

In *The Black Cat* however, we do, in fact, see the mother split into several characters: the slayer's wife, Pluto and the second cat all reproduce this one prototype. But, as ever in the unconscious, the diverse mechanisms involved in psychic elaboration function simultaneously. Through *displacement*, the psychic emphasis that belongs to the mother is shifted on the unrecognizable cats or on

the murderer's anonymous wife. Through *condensation*, in each of these three protagonists, the poet's mother Elizabeth has been fused with Virginia his wife and, what is more, has incorporated Catterina, Poe's cat, in two of them.

Also, the mechanism by which one character is split into several equally affects their derivatives. The mother, for instance, in whom other elements are so fused as to be no longer recognized, is also split into three. And each of these mothers has her own characteristics, as well as others common to all three. Though all three are symbolically castrated, either genitally, or by loss of an eye, thus declaring themselves all mothers, there was a time when Pluto had perfect eyes, a time of more virility than the second cat ever knew, though likewise a male. Thus, the three forms of the mother, in the tale, paint the mother from different angles. Pluto is first the phallic mother, at the time the small boy really believed in his mother's penis. But once Pluto has been symbolically castrated by the man, once the mother has been punished for introducing castration into the world, as witnessed by her body, the second cat appears with the large white splotch on its chest. This second cat represents the nursing mother pleading for pardon by her milk, by her life-giving breasts in lieu of the penis. Finally, in the murderer's wife, we see the mother's original human form emerge from under its totemic cat-disguise, in the same way that, with the ancient gods, the original form of the father reappears under their primitive totemic guises. And the double murder, that of the wife after Pluto, clearly reveals who, in the first instance, in cat form, was slain.

As for the father, we see him *multiplied* rather than *subdivided* in *Loss of Breath*, in the series of castrating fathers. In *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, the father is split into the two classic categories of good and bad father; on the one hand the good but weak captains, Barnard and Guy and, on the other, the rebellious mate and Too-wit, both evil but both eventually rendered impotent like the wicked grandfather with his futile cane. The only survivor, save for Pym, is Peters, himself split off from the author's *ego* and, so to speak, his heroic *ego-ideal*.

Nevertheless, the possibilities of such splittings of the father are

limited: he can never be identified with matter in general; the earth and water. Per contra, the mother, as we saw in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, appears doubly determined as Madeline and the manor while, in *The Black Cat*, she appears as the wife, as both cats and, again, as the house with its cellar. Again, in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* she appears both as a woman (the murdered old woman) and then as a room which, though all its orifices are sealed, is nevertheless forced open. In *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*, this defusion of the mother's entity possibly reaches its highest point, so generally is it attached to all objects for, though she is not revealed in her real form save as the white phantom which closes the tale, we nevertheless find her split up on every page and attached to all objects in nature: the sea and its waves, the earth and its streams and chasms, not to mention the symbolic ships, the dog Tiger and the *Tekeli-li*, each of which represents the mother, though with varying attributes.

When defusion attains such proportions, we may wonder, however, whether we can still, properly, speak of *splitting*—a term reserved for the splitting between individuals—for this special psychic mechanism, like a river confined, then loses itself in the vast and general ocean of symbolism.

The splitting-up of a single personality, moreover, seems far more appropriate to serve multiple representations of the *ego* than to depict either father or mother.

Freud writes, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*,

There are also dreams in which my ego appears together with other persons who, when the identification is resolved, once more show themselves to be my ego. . . . I may also give my ego multiple representation in my dream, either directly or by means of identification with other people.⁵

Again, in *The Relation of the Poet to Day-dreaming*, he says,

It has struck me in many so-called psychological novels, too, that only one person—once again the hero—is described from within; the author dwells in his soul and looks upon the other people from outside. The psychological novel in general probably owes its peculiarities to the tendency of modern writers to split up their ego by self-observation into many component egos, and

in this way to personify the conflicting trends in their own mental life in many heroes.⁶

One can hardly apply the term "psychological novelist" to Poe in its literal sense, but in his eminently egocentric productions many examples of splitting the ego start to the eye.

First and foremost, *William Wilson*. We saw, in analyzing this tale, how clearly Poe himself appears in the two William Wilsons; one, personifying his deepest instincts, the *id*, the other his super-ego or conscience; this last, derived by introjection from John Allan, the father. This instance is almost schematic and the fact that the author himself was partly aware of its conscious implications lends the tale a certain lack of warmth. Of more significance to us, because of the unconscious mechanisms at work, are the frequent examples where the ego is split in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*. We have already seen that Dupin, the infallible ratiocinator, is Poe in person, the world decipherer of cryptograms and puzzles; a Poe who, in a field apparently purely intellectual, took his revenge for the sexual investigations in which, as a child, he had failed. But Dupin's friend the narrator, who observes and admires the infallible ratiocinator, is once again Poe, this time as spectator, from outside, of his own final triumph. It is in the soul of this narrator, present in *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, *The Purloined Letter* and *The Gold Bug* that, as Freud says, the author dwells and looks out upon the other characters, father, mother, or split-off ego. The sailor, the owner of the orangutan, is Poe again, but now the infant present at the parental sex act, sadistically conceived. Thus, part of Poe's ego has attached itself to the father-figure orangutan in his desire to identify himself with the father to whom the mother belongs. But only the merest allusion indicates this; the creature's youth.

Examples of such splittings-off of the ego might be multiplied in Poe's tales; a mechanism frequently employed in the representation found in creative writing. At its base, moreover, is found the displacement which helps to bring this about and, also, to achieve the *regard for representability* of the writer's material. Such splittings-off enable specific aspects and qualities of the ego

to be personified and made concrete and visual. Thus, in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, the sailor visually embodies Poe's infantile curiosity, Dupin, his eager infantile investigations and the narrator his, doubtless, precocious bent toward self-observation.

So far, we have seen the same classic mechanisms at work, more or less, in the elaboration of imaginative literature and dreams; condensation, displacement and regard for representability; this last, like the moral censor, using displacement for its ends. The splitting of a single latent personality, in particular the author's ego, into several manifest characters, was found to be one way of obtaining *representability*, itself controlled by *displacement*.

When, however, we come to deal with the way in which literary creation seeks to express the *logical relation* of its themes, manifest or latent, we naturally expect to find it differ greatly from the construction of dreams. Literary creation, being a conscious product, is subject to reason and logic.

So, indeed, at first sight it appears, for the dream has no obvious means by which to represent logical relations,⁷ while literature may command the whole range of conjunctions and prepositions. Thus, imaginative writing seems in general to obey the laws of logic and, in many cases, to be coherent to a high degree. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that though, on the surface, a literary work relates a manifestly coherent story, intertwined with it and, simultaneously, another and secret story is being told which, in fact, is the basic theme. Though, therefore, the manifest tale normally obeys the rules of logic, this deeper current is subject to other laws.

In this respect the work of art resembles every product of the human psyche in which the two great forces which dominate the psyche—the preconscious and unconscious proper—are simultaneously at work, though in different degrees. The contradiction between the preconscious latent dream thoughts, for instance, coherent and logical as they are, and the alogical incoherence imposed on the same thoughts by the dreamwork once they have entered the unconscious, has been emphasized by Freud.⁸ This

same contradiction is found in creative writing and the degree in which the latent thought, itself coherent, appears incoherent and illogical, will depend on how nearly the work approaches the dream. Poe's works, in effect, fall into that category of literature which presents dream and nightmare characteristics in high degree. It need not therefore, at times, surprise us to see some loosening of the surface logic reveal the deeper alogical unconscious structure and the strange representations employed.

In *Ligeia*, for instance, the latent preconscious content of the tale seeks to express the theme: "*Because* I continue fixated to my mother, I cannot love another woman." But before these preconscious thoughts could be represented, they had to sink with the unconscious where, as a result of the infantile, archaic desire with which they were linked—that of re-finding the mother who forever dwells there—they acquired the power to emerge in the imagery of art. Thereafter, exactly as with dreams and their hallucinatory processes, the logical relation between two terms will only be expressed representationally, as in the substitution of the ghostly Ligeia's image for that of the dead Rowena. "It is *because* I am always there," the mother seems to be saying, "that it is as though other women did not exist for you." This is as though Poe himself were to declare: "*Because* I am still fixated on my mother, I cannot love another woman." Here, literature uses one of the dream's classic devices, the substitution of one person for another to express a causal relation. "*Causation*," says Freud, "is represented by succession, sometimes by the succession of dreams, sometimes by the immediate transformation of one image into another."⁹ Thus Rowena-Virginia turns into Ligeia-Elizabeth; thus the first Berenice, the little cousin, at first dark of complexion and glowing with health, almost as suddenly, in the library, is metamorphosed into the corpse-like Berenice, whose haunting teeth and yellow hair recall the nightmare "Life-in-Death" of the Ancient Mariner. In both cases, the transformation is intended to express the same causal relation, the same ban upon women which his mother fixation imposed on Poe. It is meant to express the same *because*.

In this passage from *The Interpretation of Dreams* which we have quoted, Freud shows how, in dreams, causation may also be

expressed by succession in the different parts of the dream, the former and shorter portion being, as it were, the prologue to the main dream. May we not see an example of this type of causal representation in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*? Let us recall the episode concerning Chantilly which so arbitrarily, it seems, appears to precede the history of the ape's crime. There Dupin, from various clues, guesses the train of thought which, at that moment, has led his friend to think of the actor and, from the narrator's thoughts, evokes the ridiculous Chantilly. Earlier, however, we identified Chantilly as the second-rate player David Poe, Edgar's father. Thus, disguised as Chantilly, David Poe is represented to us as, in all respects, impotent. Immediately afterwards, without transition, there follows the tale of the crime whose victims were Mme. L'Espanaye and her daughter. The deep logical and causal relation between these portions of the tale, one being but the prologue to the other, seems thus suppressed; the only apparent link between them is the ingenuity Dupin displays in both instances.

Here, succession, once more, doubtless represents the causal relation. What needs inserting between the incident regarding Chantilly and the crime of the orangutan is, again, a *because*! Poe's preconscious thoughts, sinking into the unconscious and losing their stiffening of logic, must have been something like this: "*Because* father David was impotent my mother yielded to the mighty X. . . ." As we say, the ape doubtless represented that unknown lover, and the riddle set by the crime in the Rue Morgue was, doubtless, displaced from the riddle set the child Poe by the dubious fatherhood of his sister Rosalie.

The Murders in the Rue Morgue provides other interesting instances of thoughts similarly presented piecemeal, though coherent enough in their latent content and manifest expression; coherent, that is, though in different ways, at the origin and end-point of the elaborative process.

What, indeed, could be more rational, seemingly, than the picture of an old lady living in her room? Yet as we saw, the old woman, like the room, represents one and the same person in

the story's latent content; *i.e.*, the mother, although it would seem absurd that someone inhabit herself.

Contradictions, however, never disturb the unconscious and juxtaposition, and even superimposition of different elements, is only one of the ways it expresses an actual relation between them. The room, so generally a woman symbol, here represents, given its *hollowness*, the female genitals, into which the ape enters after forcing (violating) the window. We then get a reversal frequent in the unconscious, a *turning inside out*, with the contents substituted for the receptacle. The woman is then represented as inside this *cloaca* which, in effect, is inside her; at the same time its dimensions are greatly magnified, as though to throw into relief what was most stressed, psychically, in the author's preconscious; the woman's genitals rather than the woman.

Again, the *cloaca* reappears, in the same contest, as the chimney into which Mlle. L'Espanaye's body is thrust. The mother is thus thrice represented; once in her human form and, twice, as an aperture in a building. But it is not the same cloaca that is thus twice represented for, while the room represents the *violated* cloaca—as the headless old lady represents the castrated mother—the chimney represents the pregnant cloaca. Mlle. L'Espanaye here, as it were, is the fetus, conceived via the phallic-arm of the mighty ape.

Here we see the process of *isolation* in operation, a mechanism which separately represents each idea of a given context and each incident of one representation, linked only by juxtaposition or superimposition. Only in the preconscious do time and space appear. The juxtapositions and superimpositions which result from the treatment to which the latent thoughts are subjected in the unconscious, *per contra*, are heedless of both logic and contradictions, as of time and place; thus, they express themselves in ways that seem absurd, if we relate them to the story's hidden content. However, these absurdities disappear in the manifest tale, for it is nowise absurd that an old lady lives in a room, nor that that room should have a chimney; it is even possible, at need, for an ape to perform everything with which it is credited in these murders in the Rue Morgue. But again, the deeper preconscious thoughts

which inspire the tale and succeed in achieving expression via the strange elaborative mechanisms described are also, in their way, entirely coherent. One might formulate them thus: *So my mother was the victim of a man's (the suppositious lover's) aggression. He forced his way into her genitals and there, with his mighty penis, implanted my sister.*

We shall now observe the manner in which the unconscious treats such forms of conscious and logical thought as compose *negation, contrariety and identity.*

Latent and preconscious dream thoughts which involve contradiction or opposition, once they have passed into the unconscious, lose their power to express these relations directly since, for the unconscious, *negation* does not exist. Also, in creative writing (as in the creation of neurotic symptoms) whenever, within the unconscious, some profound unconscious infantile wish attracts a train of preconscious thoughts—and subjects them to the operations of the unconscious—such thoughts are found to be stripped of their negative aspect when they reappear in the conscious content.

One example of this process may be seen in the hanging themes in *Loss of Breath* and *The Black Cat* where, in both cases, the victim represents the penis. The hanged man thus represents the *rephallization* of one who is genitally impotent. In the former, it is the author himself as Mr. Lacko'breath; in the latter, the mother in shape of the cat. The hanged man or animal all the more readily represents the phallus, in that it is popularly thought that hanging is accompanied by erection *in extremis*. But, from another angle, the fact that the body *hangs* makes it, again, represent incapacity to achieve erection and, thus, the very negation of potency. In this hanging theme, therefore, we find two diametrically opposed ideas condensed; virility and its negation.

Here we are reminded that many languages, in the remote past, attached opposite meanings to one and the same word. Ancient Egyptian offers many examples of this and modern languages, also, retain traces of the same primitive way of condensing contraries in a single form, thus associating them by contrast.¹⁰ Both literature

and dreams take full advantage of this mechanism already present in the unconscious. In *Loss of Breath* and *The Black Cat*, however, it seems introduced as a way of expressing deep irony. For though, true enough, hanging the wife or woman, or again the impotent man, on the one hand expresses the phantasy wish: "Were it but otherwise!" on the other, owing to the mechanism of representation by contraries also included here, a mechanism which expresses derision *in excelsis*, this reattribution of the phallus to Mr. Lacko'breath and the Black Cat is something like adorning a cuckolded husband with horns; a mighty but derisive phallic symbol.¹¹

So, too, with the eternal wandering to which the guilty father is condemned. The Man of the Crowd, the Wandering Jew, the Flying Dutchman and the Wild Huntsman, all, by contrariety, namely immortality, represent their death and the son's deep wish for that death.

As for cases where the manifest content of a tale shows the real situation reversed and opposite, these may serve, as in dreams, to express the wish for a similar reversal of the situation and the unconscious wish: "If only it were the other way round!" The best example of this in Poe is when M. Valdemar is hypnotized *in articulo mortis*. Here, Valdemar or Valdemar-Griswold-the-Father is represented as utterly and passively subject to the son, who only keeps him alive the better to kill him; whereas, in reality, it was Poe who was passive toward the father.

Thus the tale, through its imagery, almost openly expresses its unconscious intent. The fusion of many individuals into one personage, which thus produces a composite image as, for instance, that of the Marchesa Aphrodite in which Mrs. Stanard, Frances Allan, Elmira Royster and Elizabeth Arnold are all condensed, similarly expresses and represents the underlying identity which links these different individuals in the writer's psyche. Indeed, owing to its predilection for condensation, the unconscious seems better fitted to express *identity* than other relations.

What of tales such as *The Assignation* and its absurdities, even in the manifest content? It will be recalled that the Marchesa

Aphrodite—in such despair when her babe falls into the canal and in such delight when the “stranger,” her lover, restores it to her—decides, in gratitude, to die with the rescuer next morning, at the same hour, though not in the same place. This is manifestly absurd, for the Marchesa would thus abandon her passionately loved babe to her husband, the stern old Marchese, as no Niobe, as she first seemed, would ever have done. A second absurdity also strikes us for, in rescuing the infant, the stranger plunges into the canal wrapped in a heavy cloak. Yet, as we saw when analyzing this tale, these apparent absurdities are only the distorted expression of a perfectly coherent criticism by the preconscious. For, in the unconscious, the stranger’s rescue of the drowning child was equated with his giving her a child. The stranger, however, represents Poe, as the Marchesa represents his mother. Thus, this absurdity in the manifest content, in its way, expresses the following pronouncement in the latent content: “It is absurd to think I could have had a child by my mother. We can never be united except in death.” So strong, indeed, is the incest prohibition that even though they die at the same moment, the lovers cannot die in the same place.

This way of expressing criticism is often encountered in dreams and we see that it is also to be found in literature. In dreams, it appears independent of the criticism and conscious judgments which may be expressed in the literary product composed, as that is, in the waking state.

However, we must certainly not think that every coherent train of thought in creative writing—especially in Poe’s tales—has its validity. We must not, for instance, allow ourselves to be dazzled by the ratiocination which marks the opening of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* in connection with exactly how much ingenuity is needed for chess or mathematics or the analytic function, that superior faculty which, by sure and subtle observation, permits us to guess the thoughts, feelings and acts of others. True, there is here a conscious echo (only partly true, however, for chess has nothing to do with mathematics) of the two main divisions of mind; the *geometric faculty* and the *faculty of discrimination*.¹² Predominantly, however, the echo is of something very different,

namely memories of the small Edgar's infantile sexual investigations. For this highly developed analytical faculty which he attributes to Dupin would, indeed, have been necessary to the child he then was, in order to solve the mysterious feelings and acts of adults. Strive as his childish curiosity might, that secret eluded him. It is the memory of this, to some extent, unsatisfied sex curiosity, which is here compensated by the triumphs of Dupin the ratiocinator.

Thus we see that the "ratiocinations" scattered through Poe's works are not to be taken at their face value and that even his passion for cryptography, shared with Legrand, may represent something different. We may conclude, therefore, that reasoning in literature, as in life, may be traversed by unconscious memories very remote from what reason, apparently, dictates.

What happens, respectively, to feeling, *affect* as we say, in dreams and literature? About dreams, psychoanalysis tells us that "*the ideational contents have undergone displacements and substitutions, while the affects have remained unchanged.*"¹³ Thus, dreams whose manifest content should imply terror may, nevertheless, totally lack that affect should the latent dream thoughts, displaced on this part of the dream, in themselves be pleasurable. For example, Freud cites a woman's dream of three lions advancing upon her in which she had no feeling of fear. And with good reason for, actually, the lions represented her charming father, who had a manelike beard, her English teacher, Miss Lyons, and the composer, Loewe, who had just made her a present of some ballads. Contrariwise, some particular element in the manifest dream, apparently unimportant, may release a powerful affect if the latent thoughts it represents were originally invested with such affect. Affect would thus appear to be a constant but transferable (*labile*) emotional charge, able freely to displace itself along the dream's associative paths without loss of original intensity.

In other cases, however, the affect seems to expend itself in this process. Should the latent thought be powerfully charged with emotion the manifest dream will lack affect. (The converse, how-

ever, never happens.) This is because conflicting affects have neutralized each other, producing what Freud calls "peace after battle."

Another way in which affect is dealt with in the latent thoughts causes reversal of the latter into their contraries. The law of association by contraries provides an ample basis for this mechanism, one which is much employed by the moral censor as, also, by our wishes. Thus affects, which seem morally objectionable to us, may be transformed into their opposites, as may painful affects into pleasant.

Rather than adduce instances of dreams illustrating these various mechanisms, I refer the reader to the chapter in *The Interpretation of Dreams* from which I have quoted. I shall confine myself to demonstrating that these mechanisms may be found in literature and in Poe.

Loss of Breath provides a typical instance of reversed affect. What more tragic, indeed, for one who is impotent than the loss of potency? Yet Poe's story, in which this confession of impotence is made, is saturated with buffoonish affect. At times, this buffoonery rings false and the basic and tragic affect manages to pierce through.

Again, the affect of great sadness doubtless experienced by Poe in connection with his addiction to alcohol, with all the profound infantile fixations and frustrated primal loves that covered, undergoes the same reversal into its opposite in *The Angel of the Odd*, a tale also intentionally buffoonish and extravagant, and far more successfully than *Loss of Breath*. In general, all Poe's tales, intended by him as burlesques, have similar foundations; a tragic affect, by reversal, is converted into its opposite and comic affect. As it happens, however, these reversals are never wholly successful; Poe's laughter is anything but contagious; it is always a ghastly grin.

Per contra, that other mechanism, the apparent *suppression* of affect, is dealt with successfully in *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, though to the prejudice of the dramatic effect. Possibly, this is because it is Poe's only tale in which the theme is manifestly sexual. Here, that mighty adversary, instinct, has thrown aside its dis-

guise, whereupon all the forces of the moral censor draw up in line; the result is that a too equally matched struggle ensues and, as a result, that "peace after battle" which we have already noted. Thus, this story of the raped and strangled scent-shop assistant leaves us indifferent whereas, in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, we are moved to the depths by gripping instinctual affects which have succeeded in evading the censor in the simian or other disguises they were able to adopt.

Possibly why certain works leave us cold when, to the author, they seem full of fire and inspiration, is because a similar conflict between opposed affects has neutralized them out.

Nevertheless, the process to which affects are subjected, that which we meet most generally in Poe, especially in his finest stories, is of a wholly different order. In dreams and their elaboration, we regularly find that the unconscious affects, originally bound to significant but repressed representations, are transferred to representations which have generally arisen during the foregoing day. Often, it is as though their very unimportance determined the selection of the recent representations to which such affects are transferred, a phenomenon which, for ages, has attracted the notice of those interested in dreams. Freud has demonstrated that such a choice, in fact, appears to be determined by the moral censor, in order that the latent meaning of the dream be concealed. Nonetheless, what remains of the day's experiences and links up with our earliest, strongest and most repressed wishes, must conceal some associative bond with the deeper desires which are seeking expression.

In Poe's works, as doubtless in creative art generally—where the artist's purpose is, as it were, to instill his own unconscious affect into the unconscious of his audience or, more exactly, to make both unconscious vibrate as one—what is of prime importance is that, as perceived, this transposition should be as close as possible, in affect, to the degree of affect it is intended to pass on. A *massing* of affects then takes place, a *massing* utilized by the censor to distribute affect as it will. No instance better reveals this mechanism than *The Pit and the Pendulum*, where the deep and unconscious affects which are to enter the very unconscious

of the reader are, in effect, linked with representations of an especially infantile and deeply repressed nature; wish-phantasies to possess the mother in intra-cloacal fashion and passive homosexual wish-phantasies toward the father. All this, the inner inspiration of the tale and doubtless its original source, could never be conveyed, unchanged, to the reader since, far from pleasing him, his own repressions would cause him to shrink as, doubtless, many of our readers have already shrunk from our interpretations. Thus, the censor demands a displacement, but the process or *instance*, to which we shall later revert, which in our half-waking dreams determines the secondary elaboration of the dream and which, during the day, merges with our preconscious waking thoughts, this instance determines a displacement on objects endowed with affects analogous to the profound affect it is intended to release. These new manifest representations will still betray, to those with eyes to see, the deeper and original underlying representations; the phallic swinging pendulum and the cloacal pit. But the mighty and primal wish-affects bound up with these representations, once they have been repressed, cannot again emerge save as painfully charged anxiety. Thereupon, the wished-for pendulum, and the longed-for pit, must themselves be invested with anxiety and must convey terror. In this manner, affect is piled-up with maximum effect and the manifest content of the tale will contain a sort of *preliminary premium of anxiety* to serve as the magnet to draw out and explode the deep, unconscious anxiety thus liberated. Meanwhile, the censor's behest is also obeyed and carried out, for the reader may think that the terror, released by the tale, is merely what anyone would feel in the cells of the Inquisition.

A certain analogy may be noted here with what happens in the formation of many neurotic symptoms. The phobia of fearing to cross streets because of automobiles, for instance, is rational in part, since motorcars kill people. People with this phobia thus manage to justify themselves as regards their affect. But the *quantity* of this affect is not justified by the manifest representation of such a problematic disaster, and can only be explained by

overdetermined affect, resulting from affects which have re-emerged from deep and hidden sources in the unconscious.

The overwhelming anxiety with which all Poe's greatest tales are charged issues exclusively from this source. In each instance the preconscious selects a manifest representation associated with painful affect, as a result of which *preliminary premium of anxiety*, the underlying unconscious anxiety can be discharged. In such manner were liberated the mighty affects we feel, for instance, in *Berenice*, *Ligeia*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat*.

Of the last and remaining factor in dream formation, *secondary elaboration*, we may say that, in creative writing, it is entirely merged with the processes of preconscious waking thought and that a derivative process is the more or less wakeful residue of the day's thoughts, active in dreams. It is this *secondary elaboration* which, in dreams, when the opportunity offers, corrects too flagrant absurdities and establishes a new and manifest coherence between the latent and scattered thoughts which often differs greatly from their original latent coherence: in short, it subjects the dream to the censorship of logic and criticism. As regards the inner coherence, however, of literary works, this is established by the waking preconscious thoughts which select or reject the elements suggested in the primary unconscious elaboration of the latent thoughts, eliminate what is too absurd or shocking and set up new logical connections between what is kept. In short, they are incessantly at work criticizing and constructing in order to fit, to our most deeply repressed desires, that conscious, logical and aesthetic façade which we call creative writing and which, it must never be forgotten, generally presents itself with a coherence very different from that which prevails in the preconscious and primitive thoughts which inspire works of art.

Nevertheless, despite the essential differences which mark off literary, from dream, creation—the lesser mental and psychic regression which materializes even the most abstract thought as hallucination; the egotism, so far better masked than in dreams;

the aesthetic pleasure-premium which allows repressed desires to manifest themselves with impunity and with equal impunity be experienced by others—despite these differences which make creative writing, contrary to the dream, a *social* product which all may share, dreams and art fulfill an analogous function as regards the human psyche. Both, in fact, act as safety valves to humanity's overrepressed instincts.

At night, when sleep commands immobility, we can dream with impunity, to others or ourselves, of all we covet and are refused by life; murder even, or incest. During the day, we can also abandon ourselves to our daydreams and be similarly immobile, thus inhibiting our dangerous motor activities. But there are men with a mysterious gift who can clothe these daydreams and fictive instinctual gratifications in forms which allow others, also, to dream their dreams with them. How this is done, and what is the nature of the pleasure-premium of form and beauty which draws their fellows, is an aesthetic problem still unsolved. Nor has psychoanalysis really succeeded in explaining it, despite the depths to which it has probed the psyche. Freud merely asks us to note that aesthetic feeling seems related to erotic emotion, though sublimated, it is true.¹⁴ This, Plato had already divined in the *Phaedrus*, where the love of beautiful youths was suggested as the first step to love of the Beautiful.

Meanwhile, psychoanalysis has taught us that, throughout our lives, emotively and in disguised ways we repeat the affective experiences of our childhood. The artist, who creates beauty, is no less subject to this law and, possibly, is even more so than others, due to his essentially narcissistic make-up. We may therefore well assume that his particular aesthetic will be colored by his first love relations. Since, for all human beings the first love object was the nurturer or mother, it will not surprise us to observe that the aesthetic ideal of an artist presenting necrophilist features, such as Poe, for instance, wears the hues of the mother's death. In the most literal sense, all beauty, for Poe, whether in woman or nature, in faces or scenes, was "drawn from the cheeks" of the cherished and dying mother.

We agreed that there are artists whose aesthetic ideal appears

less directly derived from the concrete qualities of an infantile love object; artists with whom we could not thus hark back to the source. Nor need the mother, indeed, be the only origin of the artist's aesthetic ideal. The love which every child, at some time or other, feels for the father, must contribute distinctively masculine and active characteristics to any aesthetic ideal, as we find also in Poe.

Nor must we forget the further fact that all love feeling is dual, and comprises the loved object and loving subject. Earlier, we dealt with the qualities the artist's aesthetic ideal borrowed from his infancy's love objects. But there are also differences in the manner in which people love; differences conditioned by constitution, heredity and infantile happenings which modify the developing libido and by the greater, or less, congenital strength of one or other libidinal factors such as sadism, *voyeurism* and the rest. We must therefore distinguish between the *kind of aesthetic emotion* in a given artist, and the *nature of his aesthetic ideal*.

Clearly, the former is least accessible to our enquiries as containing factors impossible to trace; factors such as the original strength of the libido and its diverse elements and their greater, or less, resistance or plasticity to educative pressure and their greater, or less, capacity for sublimation: in short, all those hereditary and constitutional biological and sexual factors before which psychoanalytic investigation must, perforce, halt.

Nevertheless, whatever the artist's primary make-up and however the form of his aesthetic—that glittering veil which he wraps about his and our own deepest instincts, instincts which his contemporaries would often condemn—the elaboration, like the function of the work of art, is always the same.

With the elaboration-mechanisms in creative writing we have already dealt at length. Their function, as we have shown, is that of a safety valve for our overrepressed instincts. It now remains for us to show, with Poe as our example, that this safety valve operates under waking conditions exactly as do dreams in respect to our instincts.

To that end, we once more revert to Freud's famous comparison

dealing with dream formation. Recent events in the sleeper's life—the so-called residue of the day—may be likened to the *entrepreneur* of economic theory. But the *entrepreneur* can accomplish nothing without capital! The *capital* of the dream is furnished by the ancient, archaic, infantile wishes reactivated by the happenings of the day, for these last, even when most vivid in consciousness, of themselves would be unable to activate the dream activity. The genesis of works of art may be similarly described.

Whereas, in many of Poe's tales, the elements in this partnership perforce elude us, in so far as concerns the factors which inspired the creative process, in others it stands clearly revealed.

From the available evidence, it would seem clear that *Berenice*, *Morella* and *Ligeia* came into being as a result of the carnal temptations experienced by Poe at finding himself near to his young cousin Virginia, when first staying with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm. Another man, however, might have seen Virginia without wishing to marry her, or being inspired to write *Berenice* or *Ligeia*. Virginia here, therefore, represents the *entrepreneur*, but the capital for the undertaking could only have been furnished by Poe's rich store of buried sadistic, necrophilist, infantile memories which, with his mother's corpse, lurked deep in his unconscious.

So, too, with *The Black Cat*. The residual material of the day, in this nightmare tale, came from his family life with the dying Virginia. Was not Catterina, the cat, her constant companion in their cottage? When, in winter, they lacked fuel and the poor, weak, blood-spitting consumptive was forced to remain in bed, would not the cat curl on her bosom as if to warm her? Nevertheless, touching and pitiful though this was, it would never have inspired *The Black Cat*, had not the treasure of stored-up, ancient, sadistic urges bound, in Poe's unconscious, with his dead or dying mother, been stored up already in his soul to furnish the Virginia-Catterina enterprise with that once amassed capital.

The actual impetus to write *The Gold Bug* was doubtless communicated to Poe by his poverty, and the wish to change it for something better. Did he not, in fact, write it to compete for a prize of \$100, a competition in which he was successful? Yet all his real desires for riches would never have lent such glamour to

Captain Kidd's treasure but for its latent meaning, one so intimately bound with his deepest, most primitive, instincts. For, beyond the memory of Frances Allan and her motherly generosity, there still lay the mystery surrounding the birth of Rosalie who, as a babe, had accompanied him, and their mother, to the very shores where Kidd once buried his treasure.

Thus, works of art, like dreams, reveal themselves as phantom presences which tower over our lives, with one foot in the past and one in the present. The phantom's face, however, turns to the future, due to the sovereign wish it embodies; a wish which inspires our every activity. That is why dreams, at times, seem prophetic; namely, when our more or less unconscious efforts succeed in achieving the wish they express. But, since such wishes are still more generally condemned by our consciences than externally thwarted, few of our dreams, indeed, come to pass! The same prohibitions are at work in art. Though *The Gold Bug* may have won Poe \$100 and, next to *The Raven*, his greatest success, he would never, in fact, be able to gratify the murderous, sadistic urges he expresses in *The Black Cat*. Nevertheless, by choosing an obviously consumptive girl for his wife, the dreamer-necrophilist Poe found means to stage the sadistic drama, for himself, of an agonizing death like that he had watched so breathlessly as a child. Thus his heroines, Berenice, Morella, Ligeia, Madeline and Eleanora, seem prophetically to anticipate his own adored wife's fate.

Edgar Allan Poe, doubtless, had never any clear realization of the memories he thus immortalized in his works, nor of the fearful nature of his own sexuality. True, he did, at times, say he was haunted by a "terrible mystery" but, what that was, he could not say. As to sex, he denied and suppressed, in himself, every sexual manifestation to a love object, though "etherealizing" its every grim aspect in his works.

Yet, what lay deepest below Poe's works was as clearly sensed by others, as it was little understood by Poe. Plead chastity's cause as it might, Poe's opus, to many, seemed to embody all evil, perversity and crime. To some, indeed, Poe seemed little better than a confirmed criminal. Apart from the bad poet's natural envy of

the good, and the old male rivalry for Mrs. Osgood's diaphanous graces, much of the same sincere indignation doubtless dictated the ex-cleric's, Rufus Griswold's, condemnatory attitude to Poe. This is the only circumstance that extenuates Griswold's malevolent publication of the "Ludwig Article"¹⁵ the very day after his death, and his issue of the venomous *Memoir* which, as executor, he prefaced to the posthumous edition of Poe's works.

Nevertheless, the supreme, forbidden, instinctual urges thus sung by Poe; urges which he himself hardly comprehended and which exceed those our love instinct is permitted to gratify, cast such a spell on mankind that even in his life there rose a chorus of adulation.

Women, in particular, were conquered by his works as, indeed, they are so often by sadism. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Shelton would have wedded the Raven and Mrs. Shew and Mrs. Richmond mothered and consoled him.

Soaring far over the Atlantic, Poe's sado-necrophilist genius was destined to awake, in other countries and hearts, the same mighty and eternal instincts of those who recognized themselves in him.

¹ *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, pp. 173-183.

² *The Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 468-9.

³ *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 332.

⁴ *The Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 282-3.

⁵ *The Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 308-9.

⁶ *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, p. 180.

⁷ *The Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 296 ff. (*The Means of Representation in Dreams*).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

⁹ *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 302.

¹⁰ Cf. Freud, *The Antithetical Sense of Primal Words*, *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, pp. 184-191. In this essay Freud quotes from a work, dated 1884, by the philologist Karl Abel.

¹¹ Cf. Marie Bonaparte, "Du Symbolisme des trophées de tête," *Revue française de psychanalyse* (1927), tome. I, fasc. 4.

¹² *Différence entre l'esprit de géométrie et l'esprit de finesse*. Pascal, *Pensées*: I. 1. 2. 4.

¹³ *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 426.

¹⁴ "I have no doubt that the conception of the 'beautiful' is rooted in the soil of sexual stimulation and signified originally that which is sexually exciting. The more remarkable, therefore, is the fact that the genitals, the

sight of which provokes the greatest sexual excitement, can really never be considered 'beautiful.'” Freud, *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, p. 20, footnote.

Freud has returned to the same idea on other occasions in the same work. See also Chapter II of *Civilization and its Discontents*.

¹⁵ R. W. Griswold, The “Ludwig Article,” *New York Tribune* (Evening Edition), October 9, 1849 (*Virginia Edition*, Vol. 1, pp. 348-359).

SAUL ROSENZWEIG

The Ghost of Henry James

AMONG THE TALES of Henry James is a supernatural series composed during the final third of his life and peopled by ghosts of a character utterly Jamesian. It is the peculiarity of these wraiths which merits special attention at this centenary of the author's birth; for, unlike the ordinary creatures of their kind, they fail to represent the remnants of once-lived lives but point instead to the irrepressible un-lived life. To consider these ghosts in their significance for him is a fitting expression of interest in James's immortality.

Weirdly enough, these apparitions lead back to their point of origin in James's first published tale, "The Story of a Year," which appeared in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* for March, 1865. Here at the very outset was announced that "death" which spoke more elusively in his earlier writings, and more explicitly provided toward the end the basis for his literary specters. It was, in short, the story of his own life—written prophetically, and published at the early age of twenty-two; complemented in too perfect a fashion for other interpretation by the tales of his later years; and clarified autobiographically in the last full book he lived to complete. Sin-

gularly this tale has never been reprinted, though, as every reader of James is aware, most of his other short stories have appeared in collected form once at least; many of them more than once.

The story may be more significantly reviewed after some facts of James's early life have been recalled. The second child of Henry James, the theological and semiphilosophical writer (William James, the famous psychologist, having been by but a little over a year the first), Henry James, the novelist, spent his earliest days in a household richly gifted with intellectual fare and gracious cheer. The father was a strongly individual student of cosmic problems which for a period brought him into close association with the transcendentalist group of Concord and Boston. Emerson was a close friend, as were also many other literary and scholarly figures of the time. His books dealt with religious questions, such as the nature of evil, and with social problems, like those of marriage and divorce, in which the relation of the individual to society occupied a central place. His views were distinctly unconventional. Though he was at various times an enthusiastic student of Fourier and Swedenborg, he was never a mere disciple—the individualistic stamp was too strong on all he thought and wrote. Indeed, this markedly idiosyncratic bias made his books, despite their vivid language and command of style, accessible to a very limited audience. The majority tended to be of a mind with the reviewer who said of "The Secret of Swedenborg" that the elder James had not only written about the secret of Swedenborg but that he had kept it. One is inevitably reminded of the similar quips with which the works of his son and namesake were later received; for example, the comment in *Life* expressing the hope that Henry James would sharpen his point of view and then stick himself with it, and Mark Twain's avowal that he would rather be damned to John Bunyan's heaven than have to read *The Bostonians*.

The early life of the elder James is not without interest in the present context, especially as concerns an accident which befell him at the age of thirteen and which left its mark upon him for the rest of his life. While a schoolboy at the Albany Academy, he formed one of a group who used to meet in a nearby park for experiments in balloon flying. The motive power for the balloon was

furnished by a ball of tow soaked in turpentine. The ball would drop when the balloon caught fire, and the boys would then kick the ball around for their amusement. During one of these experiments, when Henry's pantaloons had by chance got sprinkled with turpentine, one of the balls came flying through the open window of a stable. The boy in an attempt to put out the fire, which would otherwise have consumed the building, rushed to the hayloft and stamped out the flame. In doing so he burnt his leg severely and had to remain in bed for the next two years. A double amputation above the knee proved necessary. He had a wooden leg in later years and was prevented by his infirmity from leading a very active life. Fortunately he had inherited sufficient money from his father—an influential and wealthy citizen of Albany—to obviate any routine means of earning a livelihood. Accordingly, the children of Henry James were much more closely companioned by him than would otherwise have been possible, and it is thus easier to understand that the strength of character which he had should have left so strong an impression upon their young personalities. In his *Notes of a Son and Brother* (p. 192), the son Henry refers to his father's handicap and couples the latter's acceptance of it with a further resignation to the lack of worldly recognition the message of his books received. The similarity to the son's own fate is again noteworthy, not merely for their both having been neglected by the general public—a circumstance already mentioned—but for their common lot of infirmity.

The particular infirmity of the son must at the very outset be recognized as having established itself upon fertile soil. Henry was apparently always unsure of himself. As a boy his incapacity for athletics and for schoolwork equally stood out in his impressions although he occupied the place of favorite in his mother's affections. He was especially aware of a certain inferiority to his older and more energetic brother William—he has said as much—and William has in counterpart written in one of his letters about "innocent and at bottom very powerless-feeling Harry." But the accident which offered this general orientation a specific date and place for its disclosure is still inescapably important.

No better description of it could possibly be given than that

which the victim has himself provided. He is speaking in *Notes of a Son and Brother* of his year at the Harvard Law School, and of the inception of his literary career. He continues (pp. 296 ff.):

Two things and more had come up—the biggest of which, and very wondrous as bearing on any circumstance of mine, as having a grain of weight to spare for it, was the breaking out of the [Civil] War. The other, the infinitely small affair in comparison, was a passage of personal history the most entirely personal, but between which, as a private catastrophe or difficulty, bristling with embarrassments, and the great public convulsion that announced itself in bigger terms each day, I felt from the very first an association of the closest, yet withal, I fear, almost of the least clearly expressible. Scarce at all to be stated, to begin with, the queer fusion or confusion established in my consciousness during the soft spring of '61 by the firing on Fort Sumter, Mr. Lincoln's instant first call for volunteers and a physical mishap, already referred to as having overtaken me at the same dark hour, and the effects of which were to draw themselves out incalculably and intolerably. Beyond all present notation the interlaced, undivided way in which what had happened to me, by a turn of fortune's hand, in twenty odious minutes, kept company of the most unnatural—I can call it nothing less—with my view of what was happening, with the question of what might still happen, to everyone about me, to the country at large: it so made of these marked disparities a single vast visitation. One had the sense, I mean, of a huge comprehensive ache, and there were hours at which one could scarce have told whether it came from one's own poor organism, still so young and so meant for better things, but which had suffered particular wrong, or from the enclosing social body, a body rent with a thousand wounds and that thus treated one to the honour of a sort of tragic fellowship. The twenty minutes had sufficed, at all events, to establish a relation—a relation to everything occurring round me not only for the next four years but for long afterward—that was at once extraordinarily intimate and quite awkwardly irrelevant. I must have felt in some befooled way in presence of a crisis—the smoke of Charleston Bay still so acrid in the air—at which the likely young should be up and doing or, as familiarly put, lend a hand much wanted; the willing youths, all round, were mostly starting to their feet, and to have trumped up a lameness at such a juncture could be made to pass in no light for graceful. Jammed into the acute angle between two high fences, where the rhythmic play of my arms, in tune with that of several other pairs, but at a dire disadvantage

of position, induced a rural, a rusty, a quasi-extemporized old engine to work and a saving stream to flow, I had done myself, in face of a shabby conflagration, a horrid even if an obscure hurt; and what was interesting from the first was my not doubting in the least its duration—though what seemed equally clear was that I needn't as a matter of course adopt and appropriate it, so to speak, or place it for increase of interest on exhibition. The interest of it, I very presently knew, would certainly be of the greatest, would even in conditions kept as simple as I might make them become little less than absorbing. The shortest account of what was to follow for a long time after is therefore to plead that the interest never did fail. It was naturally what is called a painful one, but it consistently declined, as an influence at play, to drop for a single instant. Circumstances, by a wonderful chance, overwhelmingly favored it—as an interest, an inexhaustible, I mean; since I also felt in the whole enveloping tonic atmosphere a force promoting its growth. Interest, the interest of life and of death, of our national existence, of the fate of those, the vastly numerous, whom it closely concerned, the interest of the extending War, in fine, the hurrying troops, the transfigured scene, formed a cover for every sort of intensity, made tension itself in fact contagious—so that almost any tension would do, would serve for one's share.

Two points stand out in these stirring words: first, James did not doubt from the beginning that his hurt would involve much and last long; and, second, he could not view it as a merely personal experience but found it indissolubly united with the war which was at that moment engulfing the entire nation. The former consideration shows clearly that somewhere in his personality the seed had been sown for what had now transpired, despite the appearance of mere accident, just as in his later tale, "The Beast in the Jungle," the hero knew without any statable basis that he would one day suffer some extremity of disaster from which his life would acquire its significance. It may be conjectured from what has already been said regarding the accidental crippling of the father at the age of thirteen that the dire experience of the son at eighteen was in some sense a repetition—that by one of those devious paths of identification which creates strange needs in sensitive personalities, Henry James, the son, while likewise engaged in extinguishing a fire may, if only for a moment, have

suffered a lapse of attention or alertness, due possibly to some glimmering association about his father's accident on a so similar occasion; and that thus favored, the accident took effect.¹ It seems not unlikely that but for this momentary incoordination, the injury—described somewhere as a sprain—would not have been sustained. Such a psychological moment can surely not be underestimated by any sympathetic reader of James since he himself made of just such minutiae the essence of his art. How much the proximity of the rhythmically moving men may have contributed to the mental association with the father and the "lapse" must remain like the lapse itself a matter of conjecture. But the presumed relationship to the father's accident seems to explain the son's avowed receptivity for the event and his certainty as to its consequences.

These considerations also shed some light upon the nature of the injury, especially in its psychological significance. James himself describes it as "the most entirely personal" and as "a horrid even if an obscure hurt." It is known also that it in some way affected his back. But the physical aspect which has on occasion been stressed is of purely secondary importance. Paramount is the subjective depth of the injury as James experienced it. Occurring at the very outbreak of the war, the event may well have caused him to suspect himself as an unconscious malingerer. A complex of guilt could thus have remained. Coming as it did at a time when *men* were needed by the country and were, like his own brothers Wilky and Robertson, answering the call, the injury even more surely constituted a proof of his powerlessness and crystallized a sense of impotence from which he never fully recovered. The avoidance of passion and the overqualification in his later writings are largely traceable to such an implicit attitude of combined guilt and inferiority; as are also some of his subsequent actions including, as will be pointed out presently, his participation in World War I.

In such a context is understandable also his consternation after having revealed his problem at finding it, as he says in *Notes of a Son and Brother*, "treated but to a comparative pooh-pooh—an impression I long looked back to as a sharp parting of the ways,

with an adoption of the wrong one distinctly determined" (p. 330). The great surgeon to whom his father conducted him for consultation in Boston might at least have offered some warning of what was in store. Obviously, the surgeon, with a not uncommon lack of interest in psychological implications, did not even begin to fathom the depths to which the experience of his patient reached, and the patient, feeling much from these depths, was the more appalled at the medical advice he received. Corresponding to this negative aspect is a positive one—the orientation which James tells of adopting toward his injury in trying to come to terms with it. In the late summer of 1861 he visited a camp of invalid and convalescent troops in Rhode Island. He had here his "first and all but sole vision of the American soldier in his multitude, and above all—for that was markedly the colour of the whole thing—in his depression, his wasted melancholy almost; an effect that somehow corresponds for memory, I bethink myself, with the tender elegiac tone in which Walt Whitman was later on so admirably to commemorate him" (pp. 310 f.). James tells of talking with the soldiers and comforting them as he could, not only with words but by "such pecuniary solace as I might at brief notice draw on my poor pocket for. Yet again, as I indulge this memory, do I feel that I might if pushed a little rejoice in having to such an extent coincided with, not to say perhaps positively anticipated, dear old Walt—even if I hadn't come armed like him with oranges and peppermints. I ministered much more summarily, though possibly in proportion to the time and thanks to my better luck more pecuniarily; but I like to treat myself to making out that I can scarce have brought to the occasion (in proportion to the time again and to other elements of the case) less of the consecrating sentiment than he" (pp. 314 f.). As he sailed back to Newport that night feeling considerably the worse for his exertion in his "impaired state," there established itself in his mind, "measuring wounds against wounds," a correspondence between himself and the soldiers "less exaltedly than wastefully engaged in the common fact of endurance" (p. 318).

Another heartening aspect presented itself at the Harvard Law School, which he at this time attended for some months, where the

"bristling horde of . . . comrades fairly produced the illusion of a mustered army. The Cambridge campus was tented field enough for a conscript starting so compromised; and I can scarce say moreover how easily it let me down that when it came to the point one had still fine, fierce young men, in great numbers, for company, there being at the worst so many such who hadn't flown to arms" (pp. 301-302).

His new orientation entailed a constructive step forward. In the months which followed, James turned to the art of fiction. His first published tale was, as has already been mentioned, "The Story of a Year." Needless to say, the story should be read in its original form to be fully appreciated. Unfortunately it is not easy of access since it was never reprinted, but a synopsis, however lacking artistically, may convey certain essentials of the plot which are needed here.

John Ford has a second lieutenancy in the Northern Army and is about to leave for the war. On a long walk just before his departure he proposes marriage to the ward of his widowed mother. The girl is named Elizabeth, or Lizzie, Crowe. She is a simple, pretty creature who is overjoyed at the prospect of marriage, but he exacts from her the promise that if anything should happen to him in the war, she will forget him and accept the love of another. He also cautions that, to avoid gossip, it may be better to keep the engagement a secret, but he does not bind her on this point. On getting home the girl goes to her room, while he tells his mother of the engagement. Mrs. Ford is definitely against the match because she thinks Elizabeth shallow and not good enough for him. (The author suggests that, having been a good mother, Mrs. Ford would have liked for her son to choose a woman on her own model.) He refuses to accept his mother's judgment about the girl, but tries to avoid contention on his last night at home. He asks his mother not to discuss the matter with Elizabeth.

After he is gone the two women say nothing about the engagement to each other at any time, but the mother has her secret plans. When Elizabeth's first blush of excitement is over, she is sent by Mrs. Ford on a visit to a friend in another city and there, decked out in finery of her guardian's making, she soon wins another

suitor—Bruce. When she leaves for home, he comes to the train to see her off and accidentally shows her the newspaper which contains the announcement of Ford's having been severely wounded. Elizabeth is in great conflict and now avoids Bruce, who would accompany her to the next station. When Elizabeth reaches home, Mrs. Ford states her intention of going to nurse her son—the very thing the girl had planned to do herself; but Lizzie is strangely relieved by this shift of responsibility. She stays at home, while Mrs. Ford goes off.

Elizabeth now dreams one night that she is walking with a tall dark man who calls her wife. In the shadow of a tree they find an unburied male corpse covered with wounds. Elizabeth proposes that a grave be dug, but as they lift the corpse it suddenly opens its eyes and says "Amen." She and her companion place it in the grave and stamp the earth down with their feet.

Various changes occur—Ford gets better, gets worse, etc., and at one point when it seems he is dying, Elizabeth accepts Bruce, who is visiting in the town at the time. But Ford unexpectedly has a turn for the better and is brought home to be nursed. His mother manages to keep Elizabeth away from him for some time. When first rejected at his door, Lizzie wraps a blanket around herself and goes out on the steps. Bruce comes by, but she will not talk with him and leaves him standing there stupefied. The next day she manages to get into Jack's room, and he appears to recognize her. When Mrs. Ford learns of this visit, she is very angry, but Jack asks for Elizabeth to come again. This time he explains to her that he knows he is going to die. He is, however, glad that she has found someone else and blesses them both. He asks Elizabeth to be kind to his mother. He dies. The next day Elizabeth encounters Bruce, but she is willing only to say farewell. She says she must do justice to her old love. She forbids Bruce to follow her. "But for all that he went in."

The story has today a timely interest of a general sort since it embodies a type of problem confronting many young men and women in the confused contemporary world. But it obviously goes deeper by bringing home the manner in which events on a national, or even international, scale may have a peculiarly personal signifi-

cance for the individual which is timeless in character. Thus James says: "I have no intention of following Lieutenant Ford to the seat of war. The exploits of his campaign are recorded in the public journals of the day, where the curious may still peruse them. My own taste has always been for unwritten history, and my present business is with the reverse of the picture."

As a first step in interpretation must be noted the facts that the hero foresees his own death, is wounded, and dies. In foreseeing his death, he makes his sweetheart promise that she will forget him and choose another if need be. The mother opposes the match, and the girl in the case is represented as abandoning the hero well before his own physical wounds have doomed him. It is hardly possible to escape the conclusion that those wounds were not meant to be fatal without the contribution of the unhappy love motif. The wounds of the hero are, in other words, not those of a patriot who dies of what befalls him in military combat. They are those of a lover forsaken by his psychological fate. The personal significance of the war as opposed to its national or external one is emphasized. The war serves merely as a screen upon which the deeply private problem can be projected.

At this point one comes readily to see that this tale of the Civil War and the author's description of his civilian injury at the time of its outbreak are closely related. The correspondence which had established itself in his mind between the wounded soldiers in Rhode Island and his own impaired state is expressed imaginatively in this first story. But the author's view takes precedence over the soldier's even in the fiction, since it is the implication of the wounds for love rather than for war that is stressed. The death of the hero in "The Story of a Year" is thus a representation of James's own passional death as implied in the *Notes of a Son and Brother*.

The dream of Elizabeth is one of the high lights of the tale and clearly illustrates James's early mastery of certain psychological processes which have been more formally described by professional psychologists only recently. Not only is the dream prophetic—that would be banal—but it portrays in clear images the conflict in the dreamer's mind and the inevitable solution she will adopt in keeping with her deepest wishes. Such a reading of the dream

indicates unmistakably that the hero's fate was sealed not by the wounds he sustained in battle, but by the psychological forces in the situation. Among such forces were not only the faithlessness of the girl but also the opposition of the mother and the hero's own self-doubt. The banter with which his early conversation with the girl is embellished—the references to the possibility of the hero's looking like a woman instead of a man after he returns with his wounds—is of considerable interest as indicating the presence of certain feminine elements in his personality to which his self-doubt and the anticipated injury may bear some relationship.

Certain details of the story might with further knowledge of James's own life lend themselves to a fuller interpretation. Thus, for instance, the possessive character of the mother in relation to the son; the heroine's being a ward of the mother—a "cousin" of the hero; and the personality of the successful rival Bruce—all raise interesting problems regarding possible intimates in James's environment. Perhaps even more significant is the absence of a father—the widowed state of Mrs. Ford. If Henry James's own father is here in question, the filial relationship may have been sensed as "too sacred" for exposure. The depth of identification between father and son in terms of their common infirmity, already discussed, agrees with such a view. This construction is, moreover, borne out by the fiction itself if the father's death existing as a given fact when the story opens is taken as corresponding to the death of the son at its close. The identity of their fates may be regarded as symbolizing their psychological identification. Paramount, however, is the other equivalence of Henry James's blight and John Ford's death. For from this "death" came the ghost which was to appear again and again in the later tales.

Before turning to the subject of this specter, attention must be paid to some intermediate stages of development. As if to materialize the "death," James actually left America to take up residence in England in 1875. The fantasy had for a time been adequate as a form of adjustment, but in the end it yielded as a forecast to the actual physical withdrawal. For this often discussed self-exile seems to have represented an escape from a world disagreeable before and now no longer tolerable. Most of James's

tales and novels were written while he was living abroad, and a great number of them, from *A Passionate Pilgrim* (1871) to *The Ambassadors* (1903), present the problems of the expatriate and the allied contrast between Old and New Worlds. He returned twice to his native land in the early eighties. His mother died during the first visit, and his father's sudden and final illness brought him back almost immediately. He then remained away again for over twenty years. After a decade, however—in the early nineties—he began writing a series of supernatural tales to which allusion has already been made. "Sir Edmund Orme," which was copyrighted in 1891 and appears to have been the first, concerns the fate of a lover who as a prerequisite to his marriage must rid himself of a ghost that represents an early jilted suitor of his prospective mother-in-law. The uncanny relationship between the older woman and young man, with the apparition of an unloved youth as intermediary, unmistakably revives the situation in "The Story of a Year." There, it will be recalled, the subordination of John Ford to his mother's judgment eventually coincided with his own presentiment of death and made together for what could on the surface well be taken for a jilting by his sweetheart. The supernatural tale, however, records the triumph of the hero over the ghost and thus sounds the keynote of James's new orientation. The same restorative tendency is even more obviously at work in "Owen Wingrave," which appeared in 1893. Owen has been preparing for a military career—the traditional profession of his family—when at the eleventh hour he decides to brave every misunderstanding, even that of cowardice, and keep faith with his deepest convictions by giving up his plans. In the stormy days that follow he accepts the challenge of the girl who, somewhat like Elizabeth Crowe in the case of John Ford, had been his childhood playmate and a dependent of his family. To prove his courage, he allows her to lock him for the night in a haunted chamber where his great-great-grandfather had mysteriously died after having accidentally caused the death of his own young son by an angry blow. Like his ancestor, Owen *wins* his *grave* in that room. "He looked like a young soldier on a battle field." In this instance the relationship of the hero to the paternal figure, rather than the maternal one—as in

"Sir Edmund Orme"—is portrayed and, similarly, the emphasis is laid upon aggression (or war) rather than upon love. The other aspect of John Ford's problem seems thus to be bared—the role of the father figure as an inhibitor of aggression. The integrity of the hero is in the end established even if, like his sire before him, he has to yield his life to the ghost of an accidental violence. As a presentation of James's personal problem at the outbreak of the Civil War, including even the relation of his injury to that of his father, this tale is once more clearly autobiographical. As in "Sir Edmund Orme," the vindicating theme is again dominant. For the ghosts which haunted their author from the undying past (as a return of the repressed) could only be exorcised by the achievement of some solution.

After a series of such tales had for over ten years proclaimed his deep preoccupation with the past, James began to plan eagerly for an American visit of six or eight months. His supernatural fantasies had foretold this revisit even as "The Story of a Year" had previously forecast the departure for Europe. The counterpart to the defensive escape was to be a compulsive return. The need he felt was strong. His brother William tried to dissuade him, in order doubtless to spare him the pain which the exposure would inflict upon his sensitive nature. But Henry insisted that he actually needed "shocks." How he experienced these in 1904–1905 is vividly recorded in *The American Scene*, which he wrote on his return to England.

The itinerary of his American trip as reflected in the chapters of this book is in itself instructive. The "repatriated absentee" or "restless analyst," as he variously styles himself, went first to New England. He then saw New York, Newport, Boston, Concord, and Salem; Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and the South—Richmond, Charleston, and Florida. He traveled also to the Far West, but his book concludes with Florida. The sequel he planned was never written, and it strikes one that, with the South accounted for, the rest was to him merely appendix.

At any rate, his visits to Richmond and Charleston—where he had never been before—stand out as especially significant. He says,

in speaking of his "going South," that it somehow corresponded now to what in ancient days the yearning for Europe seemed romantically to promise. Early in the chapter on Richmond he alludes to the outbreak of the Civil War and describes the city almost purely in terms of its having been the Confederate capital. He characterizes it (p. 358, *passim*) as "the haunted scene" and "the tragic ghost-haunted city," full of an "adorable weakness" that evokes a certain "tenderness" in the visitor. The gist of his impression he gives in an image: "I can doubtless not sufficiently tell why, but there was something in my whole sense of the South that projected at moments a vivid and painful image—that of a figure somehow blighted or stricken, discomfortably, impossibly seated in an invalid-chair, and yet fixing one with strange eyes that were half a defiance and half a deprecation of one's noticing, and much more of one's referring to, an abnormal sign" (p. 362). A strong suspicion arises that the image here projected is that of James himself in 1861. For confirmation one need only recall his own description of the manner in which his youthful injury had united itself indissolubly in his mind with the Civil War. As his own inner turmoil had corresponded then to the internal conflict of the country, so now his highly sympathetic and tender response to the vanquished faction seems builded on an understanding of his quite similar fate.

This view is borne out by his impressions of Charleston. Here, again, the war of North and South dominates his field of vision, but, unlike the Northern friend who accompanied him, he finds himself concentrating on the "bled" condition and his heart fails to harden even against the treachery at Fort Sumter. Once more a synoptic image emerges, this time of feminization: "The feminization is there just to promote for us some eloquent antithesis; just to make us say that whereas the ancient order was masculine, fierce and moustachioed, the present is at the most a sort of sick lioness who has so visibly parted with her teeth and claws that we may patronizingly walk all round her. . . . This image really gives us the best word for the general effect of Charleston. . . ." (pp. 401 f.). One recalls almost with a start the bantering conversation in "The Story of a Year" of forty years earlier between the hero

and the heroine as to the possibility of his looking like a "lady" when he returns from the war with his wounds. John Ford carries on the figure by saying that even if he grows a moustache, as he intends to do, he will be altering his face as women do a misfitting garment—taking in on one side and letting out on the other—insofar as he crops his head and cultivates his chin.

In general, then, the impression seems sustained that Henry James's visit to America in 1904–1905, after twenty years of absence, was largely actuated by an impulse to repair, if possible, the injury and to complete the unfinished experience of his youth. He was, as it were, haunted by the ghost of his own past and of this he wished to disabuse his mind before actual death overtook him. Since the Civil War had played so vital a part in his early blight, he now visited the South for the first time and received there those impressions which bear so strong a mark of personal projection.

The plausibility of this reconstruction and of the preceding interpretation of "The Story of a Year" is strengthened by a psychological reading of the later supernatural tales, especially "The Jolly Corner." This short story was first published in the *English Review* for December, 1908, shortly after his visit to the United States. It is the story of Spencer Brydon who as a man of fifty-six returns to America after many years of residence in Europe. He has come to look at his property—the house on the Jolly Corner—where he was born and grew up. Before long he becomes absorbed in the old house to the point of visiting it nightly in the strange hope of encountering there his own alter ego—the ghost of his former self. When he finally does succeed and is confronted by the specter he has been seeking, he notes among other things that two fingers on its right hand are missing. He cannot endure to face the image before him—he refuses to recognize himself there—and overwhelmed by the extremity of his emotion, he falls unconscious. When he revives, Alice Staverton, whom he had known in his early days before taking up residence abroad and whom he has been seeing since his return, is standing over him. She, too, has seen the ghost—in a dream—and thus knew that Spencer had made the encounter. He protests to her that the shape he has met was not himself till she quite simply declares, "Isn't the whole

point that you'd have been different?" It is clear from the context that the heroine could have been in love with the rejected personality (the ghost) since she understood it. She is, however, equally ready to accept Brydon as he is today and reconcile him, perhaps, to those unacknowledged aspects of himself which have kept him from her all these years—which have driven him abroad to escape himself.

The specter in this tale is typical of Henry James. Unlike the ghosts of other writers, the creatures of James's imagination represent not the shadows of lives once lived, but the immortal impulses of the un-lived life. In the present story the ghost of Spencer Brydon is obviously his rejected self. Moreover, an injury—the two lost fingers—here stands in some relation to the fact that the life was not lived or that, in other words, a kind of psychological death had occurred. Finally, the injury and the related incompleteness have entailed an unfulfilled love. The hero has fled the heroine because he could not face himself.

At this point one is obviously but a step from "The Story of a Year," written forty years earlier than "The Jolly Corner." To repeat what has more than once been implied: with the death of John Ford the ghost of Spencer Brydon came into existence. The story of the latter is a complement to that of the former. As Henry James—or Ford—left America to reside abroad, Brydon returns to confront his former self. The identity of the characters is established by the injuries each suffered—James's "obscure hurt," Ford's wounds, and Brydon's missing fingers. But like James during his visit in 1904–1905, Brydon is obviously attempting to rectify the past—to face it again and test the answer previously given. There is thus represented here not merely a harking back with vain regrets but an obvious effort to overcome old barriers and pass beyond them. It is in this spirit that the woman in the case, Alice Staverton, now likewise appears as a complement to Elizabeth Crowe. Whereas Elizabeth had been faithless, Alice is ever faithful and still ready to accept her lover both as he was and as he is. Even the device of the dream recurs—the dream of Elizabeth having presaged her abandonment of Ford, while that of

Alice brings her through her empathy to the scene of Brydon's overwhelming encounter with his ghost.

The complementary relationship of these two tales, standing at the very beginning and all but the end of James's creative work, is so striking that one is impelled to believe that the second was intentionally written as a counterpart to the first. This conjecture is supported by chronological considerations. When James toured America in 1904-1905, memories of the Civil War were vividly revived for him, as has already been mentioned. "The Story of a Year" must surely have been recalled at that time in sharp relief. But one of the more practical reasons for the journey was to arrange for the publication of the definitive New York Edition of his collected fiction. After completing *The American Scene* on his return to England, he spent the next two years in rereading, selecting, and meticulously revising his novels and tales. Critics have assailed the rigorous censorship to which the earlier writings were subjected in this process, but James's action is understandable if one compares the revision and the revisit as attempts equally to reclaim the past and reshape it while there was yet time. In the careful review of all his past work which the preparation of the collected edition entailed, James must again have come upon "The Story of a Year," this time paginally. But he did not include this tale. What one does find there—psychologically instead—is a new story, "The Jolly Corner," which was first published in 1908 and was probably written during the arduous process of the collective revision. This tale was plainly based on the American visit, yet it no doubt also represented a retelling of the omitted "The Story of a Year"—the most radical revision of them all. For in "The Jolly Corner" one finds a coalescence of revisit and revision which satisfactorily explains the complementary relationship of this story to the first ever written. Through marking the persistence of the trend one comes to see that, despite the wishful reworking, "The Story of a Year" was nevertheless the story of a life.

Towards the end of 1909 and for nearly a year thereafter, James suffered from a severe nervous depression which completely incapacitated him for work. This illness must in the foregoing context be taken as a reaction to the failure of his restitutive efforts.

Neither the supernatural tales nor the American return nor the definitive revision of his works had achieved the solution he desperately sought, and despair overtook him. His brother William's death toward the end of 1910 removed a mainstay of his life and deepened his misery. Further illness in 1912 made the end seem tragically near.

But through everything he held on, actuated still by the same forward impetus that had unfailingly declared itself before. He was unwittingly preparing for the final and highest adventure of his life. For with the outbreak of World War I in 1914, this reticent man of seventy-one, until now without any obvious interest in political affairs, of a sudden identified himself with *social action*. He recognized the cost that might be involved when he compared himself to the quiet dweller in a tenement upon whom the question of "structural improvements" is thrust and he feared for his "house of the spirit" where everything had become for better or worse adjusted to his familiar habits and use. But this "vulgar apprehension" could not deter him; and, as he says in *Within the Rim*, "I found myself before long building on additions and upper stories, throwing out extensions and protrusions, indulging even, all recklessly, in gables and pinnacles and battlements—things that had presently transformed the unpretending place into I scarce know what to call it, a fortress of the faith, a palace of the soul, an extravagant, bristling, flag-flying structure which had quite as much to do with the air as with the earth" (pp. 19 f.).

His efforts for the Allied cause knew no bounds. He visited army hospitals and refugee encampments (as he had on a certain earlier occasion visited a military camp of invalids in Rhode Island); made pecuniary contributions and wrote articles for war charities; supported movements like the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps; and performed a host of lesser tasks as a daily routine from the beginning of the war until his death. His friends were amazed—even as they were inspired—by the fervor of this notoriously passionless writer. As Percy Lubbock, the editor of James's *Letters*, well says: "To all who listened to him in those days it must have seemed that he gave us what we lacked—a voice; there was a trumpet note in it that was heard nowhere else and that alone rose to

the height of the truth. For a while it was as though the burden of age had slipped from him; he lived in the lives of all who were acting and suffering—especially of the young, who acted and suffered most. His spiritual vigour bore a strain that was the greater by the whole weight of his towering imagination; but the time came at last when his bodily endurance failed. He died resolutely confident of the victory that was still so far off.” Edmund Gosse, among others, expressed the opinion that James’s death early in 1916 was definitely hastened by his profligate expenditure of energy in war service.

In these days when the centenary of Henry James’s birth coincides with World War II, the significance of his death during World War I well lends itself to further examination. Without detracting in the least from the positive significance of the contribution, one may still trace the line of its descent from the earlier record already revealed. Is it too much to suggest that the unparalleled fervor of his actions is to some extent explained by a belated compensation for his failure at the time of the Civil War? In favor of such a view is the fact that the last book he lived to complete—*Notes of a Son and Brother*—and the one in which he recounted the memories of his youth, including his injury, was published in 1914. His early experiences were thus unusually fresh in his mind at the outbreak of the war. But to this inference may be added his own testimony as found in the opening sentences of the little volume, *Within the Rim*, in which are collected his wartime essays: “The first sense of it all to me after the first shock and horror was that of a sudden leap back into life of the violence with which the American Civil War broke upon us, at the North, fifty-four years ago, when I had a consciousness of youth which perhaps equalled in vivacity my present consciousness of age. . . . The analogy quickened and deepened with every elapsing hour; the drop of the balance under the invasion of Belgium reproduced with intensity the agitation of the New England air by Mr. Lincoln’s call to arms, and I went about for a short space as with the queer secret locked in my breast of at least already knowing how such occasions helped and what a big war was going to mean” (pp. 11 f.). The analogy of the wars in his own consciousness thus attested, it is not difficult to believe that a

common motivational tie was at least implicitly at work. He might have been found wanting in 1861, but he would not be found so on this second and doubtless final occasion. At that earlier time he had adjusted to his personal wounds by withdrawal and by such constructive acts as the art of fiction permitted. But now a positive participation in real social action would provide the solution for the problem which had haunted him through life. Instead of hanging his head as a war disability, he would stand forth as a war hero; England, which had been for him a refuge of escape, would become a citadel of his true assertion; and America, which had exhibited him as weak, would now be exhibited by him as weak.

In this setting becomes intelligible the mooted question of James's assumption of British citizenship a few months before his death. He had, on the one hand, been adding to his numerous activities in the Allied interest repeated statements of his consternation that America did not enter the war at once. On the other hand, his fervent identification with the English cause increased daily. Thus in July, 1915, he at last became a naturalized British subject. By this stroke he changed for himself the orientation of a lifetime. His haven of refuge was transformed into the many-flagged and turreted embattlements of which he well might write with a surge of liberated passion. From these heights he could in the end look down upon America hanging back in the distance. His own words—in a letter to his nephew—again at this point offer direct confirmation: "I have testified to my long attachment here in the only way I could—though I certainly shouldn't have done it, under the inspiration of our Cause, if the U. S. A. had done it a little more *for* me. Then I should have thrown myself back on that and been content with it; but as this, at the end of a year, hasn't taken place, I have had to act for myself, and I go so far as quite to think, I hope not fatuously, that I shall have set an example and shown a little something of the way."

It seems not improbable that this excessive expenditure of energy in a man over seventy brought on a death premature by some months or even years. But he must surely have felt that the reward had been worth the cost. And regarding these final events in the terms not of what they may have been surmounting in his past,

but, as from the vantage point of the present, they appear progressively to mean, one can respond in full accord; since James by the active assertion of that period re-established vital contact with contemporary social realities.

So at last the pattern of the genius which was Henry James emerges. Suffering since childhood from a keen sense of inadequacy, he experienced in his eighteenth year an injury that sharply crystallized this attitude into a passional death. The ghost which as an apotheosis of his unlived life appears repeatedly in his later tales was liberated from this "death." Many aspects of his experience and work up to the very time of his actual death were oriented as movements back to and forward from this nucleus.

The broader application of the inherent pattern is familiar to readers of Edmund Wilson's recent volume, *The Wound and the Bow*. This title paraphrases the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles in which the hero's rare skill with the bow is portrayed as having a mysterious, if not supernatural, relationship to his stubbornly persistent wound—a snake bite to the foot. Abandoned in his illness for years on the island of Lemnos, Philoctetes is finally conducted to Troy, where he fights and kills Paris in single combat, thus becoming one of the great heroes of the Trojan War. Reviewing the experience and works of several well-known literary masters, Wilson discloses the sacrificial roots of their power on the model of the Greek legend. In the case of Henry James the present account not only provides a similar insight into the unhappy sources of his genius but reveals the aptness of the *Philoctetes* pattern even to the point where the bow of the wounded and exiled archer is at the last enlisted literally in a crucial military cause.

PSYCHOANALYTIC EPICRISIS

In the jargon of psychoanalysis the story just sketched could be retold as follows. The Oedipus situation of Henry James included a highly individualistic father—a cripple—and a gifted sibling rival (William) who together dwarfed the boy in his own eyes beyond hope of ever attaining their stature. A severe inferiority complex

resulted. The problematic relationship to father and brother was solved submissively by a profound repression of aggressiveness.

At the age of eighteen, in the earliest days of the Civil War, Henry sustained a persistent physical injury. A keen sense of created impotence, combined with a possible suspicion of unconscious malingering, now crystallized his early sense of inferiority into "castration anxiety." The "obscure but intimate hurt" was experienced as involving not only the manliness of war, then socially so moot, but also the virility of love, which was focal in the adolescent stage of his individual development. Identification with the crippled ("castrated") but powerful father could have figured in the trauma both through the son's remarkably similar accident and in their common incapacitation. At the same time, the injury, interpreted more deeply, may have been unconsciously embraced as a token of filial submission: the acknowledged weakness was at once peculiarly appropriated as "an inexhaustible interest." Introversion in which both aggression and sexuality were repressed was now established as a *modus vivendi*.

The possible role of constitutional bisexuality should be noted in passing, even if only speculatively. Injuries like the one experienced by James may be conceived to subdue the more active and masculine components of personality and accentuate as a counterpoise the more passive and feminine ones. The creative drive of genius seems often to be enhanced even as its capacity is paradoxically also limited by such a destiny.

It was, at any rate, after his injury that James turned to the art of fiction. His writing served him both as an escape from frustration by way of fantasy and as a partial means of solving his problems through sublimation. But the fantasied escape proved insufficient, and he therefore soon abandoned the American scene that had become to him intolerable. During most of his life he lived in England. His various novels and tales written both before and after the departure from America acquired their notorious peculiarities—precious overqualification of style and restraint of sexual passion—from the repressed pattern of his life. The acute psychological insights in which his work abounds sprang in part, however, from the introspective vigilance allied with these "defects."

As James began to enter the final third of his life, a resurgence of his buried drives occurred. The supernatural stories which began to come from his pen during this period testify to this "return of the repressed." His ghosts consistently represent an apotheosis of the un-lived life. This fictional attempt to face again the early unsolved problems was followed compulsively by an actual revisit to America. As the criminal returns to the scene of his crime, James now went back to the haunts of his catastrophe. But the neurotic repression failed to yield, and a severe nervous depression that expressed his sense of defeat ensued.

With the outbreak of World War I soon following, when he was already over seventy, came a final effort at solution—now not by sublimation in fiction, by escape or return, but in relationships to the real social world. It is not surprising that a note of overcompensation was present in these war activities, especially in the assumption of British citizenship, and that his end was probably hastened by his profligate expenditure of energy. But in large measure he re-established contact with the realities of his environment by these acts and in the same degree he thus succeeded in laying the ghost of his un-lived past before death overtook him.

Three wars are thus spanned by the ghost of Henry James: the Civil War, which evoked it mortally in his youth; World War I, which permitted it to be laid before his death; and World War II, which, occurring during the centenary of his birth, recalls it anew in the immortal sense.

¹ The coincidence between the accidents of Henry James, Sr., and his son Henry is amazingly paralleled by a similar duplication of experience between the father and the son William. In this latter case a psychological catastrophe rather than a physical injury is involved, but the powerful relationship between father and son is again inescapable. For a description of the experiences, compare William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 160-61, with the footnote reference to the work of Henry James, Sr. (*Society: The Redeemed Form of Man*, pp. 43 ff.), where the father's case of equally sudden terror is recounted.

PHYLLIS GREENACRE

Jonathan Swift

SWIFT HAD PROBLEMS of identity and of identification which were inherent in the strangeness of his birth, with his father dying almost as he was conceived. They were increased by the relative personal isolation of his childhood, and again reflected in the stories of his declining years when with senility already engulfing him, he showed an interest in his mirrored image and remarked, whether in renunciation or self-definition, "Poor old man!" and "I am what I am. I am what I am." In addition to the strangeness of his birth, the kidnapping made complications for his settling in the gradual way of most children the problem: "This is I. My name is such and such. I live here with my mama and papa." Then just at the most vulnerable epoch of a child's life, the Oedipal period, he was returned to his mother in a different country, only to have her disappear again in a few months. The security of continuity of relationship, whether to people or to surroundings, was not his by Fate. Rather he was the center of a Family Romance,¹ determined by reality, which might otherwise have remained only a powerful fantasy.

His position throughout childhood was always somewhat anom-

alous, both in school and in his uncle's family; he was not quite a first-class member of the family. At twenty-one he visited his mother and at twenty-two he took a position, not clearly defined, in the household of Sir William Temple. It must have been rather difficult for this young man, who had never lived regularly in a family, to find himself in this large and varied ménage, kind and considerate though the Temples were. Twenty-two is hardly the optimum time to be initiated into family relationships and young Swift had many difficulties; although he remained with the Temples off and on for ten years, he can hardly be said to have been thoroughly at home there. It could not make up for the vacuoles in his early life.

It is to be expected further from the peculiar circumstances of his first years that Swift would have grave distortions of his Oedipal development and of his castration complex. These clinical results which we could predict from the barest events of his life are indeed borne out by his character, his writings, and the course of the later life which he carved out for himself.

Swift's physical health and physical symptoms are worthy of notice. It was said by some that he was a premature, frail infant; but these are general statements and not clearly documented. The mother's struggle with poverty was definite, however. She was not superhuman, and we must conclude that there was some disturbance in her relationship to the infant whose birth so complicated her fortunes; but in just what direction is unclear.

That there was a two-mother situation between the own mother and the nurse is also apparent from the basic facts. That there was a two-father situation in rumor and in fantasy was indicated by the reports of illegitimacy running parallel with remarks that the father never knew of the son's conception. One would surmise that the question of paternity might well have been raised and was to reappear forty-eight years later in the never-solved mystery of Swift's alleged marriage, reputedly interrupted by someone revealing that Swift and Stella were brother and sister, both the natural children of Sir William Temple. Nowhere is there any evidence, nor does any one of the Swift biographers support the idea that there is real truth in this story. Indeed, it can be proved from historically established facts that Sir William Temple was in another

part of the world at the time of the conception of Jonathan Swift. That the Temples, both Sir John Temple and his son Sir William, knew the Swifts and that Sir John was often in Dublin and was instrumental in getting the elder Jonathan Swift an appointment as Steward at the King's Inn is also clearly established. This correction to the story does not, however, dispose of it in its entirety. Even if it is the gossip incident to the peculiar life constellation and character of Jonathan Swift and the outcome of the human weakness for malicious speculation and drama, still its occurrence and even more its persistence has some significance, which cannot be thoroughly abolished by objective correction. It is not clear who is supposed to have made the revelations, though the guess was hazarded that it was Rebecca Dingley. The important aspect of the situation would seem to be that the story was probably known to Swift in one form or another. In other words, it either sprang from his fantasy primarily or so corresponded to his latent fantasy that he made no apparent effort to investigate or refute it. This matter of the Family Romance and the way in which it fits into Swift's symptomatology will be taken up again later.

In the *Memoirs of Scriblerus*, Swift brings out more play of fantasy about birth than is true in his biography of *Gulliver*. In both *Scriblerus* accounts, the parents had difficulty in begetting a child. In one instance, the pregnancy with Martin was preceded by an abortion of a female child; in both, they had to resort to magic aid. Once the sorceress advised that if the father took seven sheets of paper and wrote upon each with seven alphabets of seven languages, in such a way that no one letter stood twice in the same posture, then clipped all the letters apart and put them in a pillow which would be used by the helpful wife to support her in a certain position, pregnancy would follow. This fantasy might indicate an ironic suggestion of origin from magic thought and/or from perverse relations.

Both *Scriblerus Memoirs* report that on the eve of giving birth, the mother had a dream that she had given birth to a monstrous thing like an inkpot which spirited black liquid in many rivulets throughout the room. The sorceress interpreted this dream to mean that the "innumerable streams are the types or symbols of [the

infant's] Genius, and the Extent of it; by them are signify'd the great Variety of Productions in human Learning, that will render him the Admiration and Surprize of all the Universe; as to the Spout, it betokens the Sex, and that it will be a Son." When the infant was born, he especially enjoyed the rattling of paper, and dabbling in ink. Later the nurse announced joyfully that the baby had said "Papa," but the father soon determined that the word really was "paper." Thus was launched the child who was to be the Genius of the Age.

To return to the matter of Swift's early health, when physical comfort so strongly interplays with emotional development—there is little knowledge of the period immediately after birth, except the implication that his health was not generally good, as it was reported that when Abigail Swift discovered the whereabouts of her kidnapped son, she sent word that he should not be returned until he was well enough to bear the strain of travel better. But *when* this is supposed to have occurred is obscure, and our chief source of information is Swift's own scant account which puts as good a face on everything as possible. He gave no account of illness in his boyhood. Yet by his late adolescence or early manhood he had instituted ritualized walking to demonstrate and improve his strength. The pictures of him in his maturity show a man of unusually fine physique, handsome and stalwart. By the age of twenty-two, he was rather frequently complaining of ill-health: weakness, pains, stomach-aches (sometimes physical pains and sometimes figurative statements of aversion), headaches, and rather diffuse body pains. He also developed attacks of dizziness with deafness, thought to be Ménière's disease; but attributed by him to the eating of "stone fruits."² Many of his complaints had to do with gastrointestinal disturbances, although he was a hearty eater who liked good food. He was extremely fearful of insanity from a quite early age; and was reiterating his defiance of death so strongly that he seemed to be protesting too much. An oft-repeated statement was that life was not worth retaining, but health was. In the *Third Voyage of Gulliver*, the problem of the fear of death and its cure is presented in the loathsomeness of the immortal creatures, the Struldbrugs.

Swift apparently suffered from severe anxiety and diffuse hypochondriasis of the type which so often accompanies an unusually severe castration complex, in which pregenital determinants are strong. Another characteristic of Swift's hypochondriasis was that it always increased when he was confronted by sickness in others. Then he frequently turned away, in seeming callousness, but generally felt worse himself at once. While some of these situations were such as to suggest that the illness of another made him feel guilty and that he was not a man who could face much guilt, there is further the question whether the sight of suffering did not cause him to take it onto himself through a process of primary identification. This is defended by Swift in a bitter poem *Life and Character of Dr. Swift*, written in 1731, in which he states, "I could give instances enough that Human Friendship is but Stuff, Whene'er flatt'ring Puppy cries You are his Dearest Friend . . . he lyes.—" and later, "True Friendship in two breasts requires The same Aversions and Desires; My friend should have, when I complain, A Fellow-feeling for my Pain." A friend should identify completely, be a mirror image of one's self.

What was written so large and so conspicuously in all of his impersonal writings, and was dealt with very delicately in his letters was his vivid preoccupation with the affairs of the lower bowel.³ Gulliver recounts the time, conditions, and utilization of his toilet functioning, especially his defecation, with a fidelity worthy of a young child on a trip and a little confused about how to go about these essential duties. In the Fourth Voyage it is quite clear that the foul Yahoos represent the dirty, unrestrained sexual people while the Houyhnhnms are the idealized, gentle, reasonable ones, the superego figures, possessing all of the reaction formations against the primitive animal instincts. In some of Swift's poems he was particularly outspoken concerning the filthiness of the female body.⁴ In the Second Voyage of the *Travels*, it is the older nurse (who suckles the year-old child who has in turn been threatening the tiny Gulliver) who is described as the most loathsome of all creatures. It is at this point in the *Travels* that Swift through Gulliver splits the nurse image into two, creating an overgrown foul and smelly wet nurse and a preadolescent protective

and charming little girl nurse. In general, Gulliver, like Swift, found body apertures, even the pores of the skin, disgusting. That this hostility is particularly focused on nurses is apparent in other productions as well. In his *Directions to the Nurse*, he writes: "If you happen to let the child fall and lame it, be sure never confess it; and if it dies all is safe. Contrive to be with child as soon as you can, while you are giving suck, that you may be ready for another service when the child you nurse dies or is weaned." In the *Memoirs of Scriblerus*, there are similar invectives against the "accursed nurse" who, among other things, made the infant's ears "lie forever flat and immovable."⁵

A second theme, rather overproduced in Swift's writing and in his life as well, is the confusion—determinedly rationalized—between the sexes. This appears specifically in his open wish to make boys of both Stella and Vanessa; further elaborated in his various treatises on Education. Never is there any reference to the preparation of girls for motherhood or even for the social demands of the day. But there is the often-repeated requirement that their minds should be as much like the minds of men as possible, and always the exhortation to be cleanly, reasonable, and dispassionate. The confusion of the sexes is further apparent in the (several times repeated) description of low-hung breasts and nipples, which approximate the male genitalia. With his tendency to the polarization of characteristics he tended to deal life into pairs of opposites. He would see women as essentially emotional and men as reasonable, temperate and just. It was the women who were the dangerous seducers and the destroyers of reason. In the country of the Houyhnhnms, the horses were male and female, and so were the Yahoos; yet predominantly the Yahoos seemed to represent the evil, dirty, sexual, female elements, and the horses the honorable, just, deliberate, and gently male elements of character. In a letter, Swift even referred to Stella as a Yahoo. To make an advance to no one was one of his stated principles of behavior, neither to man nor woman. In order that he might be quite safe, others must always take the first step toward him.

Swift was a stalwart, well-built man, with striking blue eyes that were sometimes cold and penetrating, and again sparkling and

merry. Pope described Swift's eyes as being azure as the heavens. He was possessed of unusual charm and wit; a suave, adroit man, he was sought after in social affairs and as a diner-out, a favorite of both men and women. His driving curiosity and ambitions, expressed in his many interests, and his furious activities which made him time and again the focus of all attention were so thoroughly knit into his character that one is likely to forget how much these result from primitive scopophilia and exhibitionism which continually alternated and interplayed, the very contrasts increasing the dramatic quality of the man. It was to be expected that a posthumous child would inevitably be a special child, as much or more than is the child with the caul. Certainly too, the kidnapping and the life in the home of the nurse in England would tend to make him an object of great interest and curiosity. A woman who kidnaps a child is in some way a pathological person, with a too intense interest in the child whatever its meaning to her may be. Further, while there was gossipy rumor about the possible illegitimacy of the infant, born so long after his father's death in Ireland, it is only reasonable to assume that such gossip would be even stronger in England when the nurse, whether married or not, returned with this baby after a prolonged absence in Ireland.

In the *Travels*, active and passive voyeurism is ubiquitous. Not only were the voyages undertaken out of a lust of the eye, intuitively forecast by Gulliver years before their beginning was rationalized as being motivated by economic considerations, but it is also clear that the seagoing surgeon found the pressures of family life irksome in the extreme. In the First Voyage, Gulliver is an enormous figure of overwhelming importance, cast up out of the sea, and endangering those around him by his very existence. This may very well express the primary narcissistic omnipotence of the infant who did threaten the welfare of those who cared for him. In the Second Voyage, he is reduced to a small size among giants, expressive of the helplessness of the child and the awareness of his small size which must become apparent to an infant between a year and eighteen months.⁶ In both Voyages, Gulliver is put on exhibit for the populace and himself is engaged in noting everything that goes on around him. The specific reference to genital exhibitionism

has already been noted. In general, however, it is conspicuous that the exhibitionism is largely expressed in excretory rather than in genital sensual or reproductive terms. In the Third Voyage, the voyeurism is almost wholly active and in any event is expressed largely in social and not in personal corporeal terms. Gulliver does reciprocate, giving a short account of the wonders and activities of England.

Perhaps the most fascinating problem of Swift's development was the configuration of his Oedipus complex. He had no real father on whom to play out his Oedipal development. Indeed his Oedipal crime was accomplished by his very conception, after which his father died while the son lived, and possessed his mother, at least in infancy. Whether or not he found a substitute father during the years with the nurse in Whitehaven, he was again confronted clearly with a fatherless state precisely at the height of the developmental Oedipal period. That there was an attempt to find a father by an interest in his English ancestors, especially his English clergyman grandfather, is probable. The nature of his Oedipal crime may well be expressed in the Second Voyage of Gulliver in which he is given a temple as a place to stay, which had been defiled by the murder of a man many years before.⁷ Gulliver's recalling of the heroic ancestors of history on the Island of Glubbdubdrib belongs here.

At the time when most boys are giving up their sexual longings for the mother, Swift's mother left him, and he was presented with a collective homosexual existence. It is evident that such a concatenation of events would enormously increase feelings of guilt from whatever source; and might lead to a reinforcement of righteousness and increased effort in the direction of spirituality, together with a strong rebellion against the unfairness and hypocritical attitudes often encountered in the church. Other determinants of this attitude will be dealt with in connection with the discussion of the Family Romance.

His attitude toward the church resembled much the disillusion which children ordinarily feel in their parents, and certainly the church was quite literally bound up with Swift's forefathers. After the age of five, Swift had institutions instead of parents, as he

passed from school to church to society in general. It is no wonder that having "killed" his father by his conception, and lost mothers three times before the age of six, he should have accepted the protection of the school with chronic suppressed rage and the appearance of low-spirited compliance. What were the explanations regarding his mother and sister made to him during this period? What accounts did he hear from Uncle Godwin and his cousins? These influences in his childhood are most mysteriously hidden. The early death of the father—prehistoric as far as the child was concerned—could not help but increase the boy's fear of death for himself, according to the law of talion; a fear which he met repeatedly by the denial that life was worth having. While he cursed his birth picturesquely, he celebrated his birthdays for himself and the people close to him faithfully; and he lived beyond the Biblical time allotment.

That the boy Swift, lonely and disappointed, should have suffered from masturbation worries is not surprising. Swift, the man, wrote seldom of any genital sensuality, but there are at least two places in which he makes clear and extensive references, and in several others, indirect statements regarding masturbation fantasies and castration fears. Most outspoken of these is a report of the sagacity of Dr. Martin Scriblerus in treating a young nobleman at court who suffered from distempers of the mind. This young man began to show affectations of speech, to talk in verse, to exhibit a whimsicality of behavior, and to seek odd companions. Scriblerus diagnosed him as being in love, but since there was no woman involved and the young man talked to himself, the doctor determined that the patient was blindly in love with himself. "There are people," he said, "who discover from their youth a most amorous inclination to themselves," adding later, "There are some people who are far gone in this passion of self-love: they keep a secret intrigue with themselves and hide it from all the world besides. This Patient has not the least care of the Reputation of his Beloved, he is downright scandalous in his behavior with himself. . . ." Scriblerus then proceeds to describe the sort of remedies which Swift so often recommended for himself and others: that he should give up extravagance; that he should travel

in relative hardship; look at himself in "naked truth," and purge himself weekly. In short, the sufferer should do those things which Lucretius had recommended as a cure in the case of women. If all this did not avail, nothing was left, said the Doctor, but to let the man marry himself and when he had tired of himself, he might drown himself in a pond. What a complete version of Narcissus!

It is to be remembered that the other traveling surgeon had his preliminary training under a master named Bates. To quote again from Gulliver's own story, "My good *Master Bates*, dying in two years after and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren." There is the question whether this apparent pun in words can possibly be significant. Swift's peculiar and varied relation to language in which punning has a conspicuous place lends support to the notion that this might even be a sly conscious trick of self-revelation. This seems the more probable in that the location of this explanation in the Gulliver account corresponds so closely to that in the *Memoirs of Scriblerus* of the story of the young-nobleman-in-love-with-himself. In the earlier *Scriblerus* version, the confession is more explicit but is disowned through the device of attributing the disturbance to a patient; in the Gulliver account it is admitted but concealed in the pun. The further question might be raised whether the word *masturbation* was known to Swift. From the fact that it had appeared as part of a title of a book only a few years after Swift's death, we may surmise that it probably had some fairly wide usage before this.⁸

The greatest exposition of the masturbation fantasies appears, however, in the Third Voyage. Here, after a glorious start, Gulliver was much reduced by the pirates, set adrift in a canoe, and fell into great despondency. He finally came to an island which was perfectly round in shape, four and one half miles across, and floated in the air, rising and falling above the body of the continent from which it sometimes shut out the sun. Many of the people on this island were so taken up with intense speculation that they forgot to speak or pay attention to those around them.

Consequently, they kept "flappers" who tapped them on the mouth, eyes or ears, with blown bladders which were attached like flails to the ends of short sticks and contained small quantities of dried peas or pebbles. As has already been described, this island moved up and down to a height of four miles, being balanced so delicately on a lodestone that the tenderest hand could move it.⁹ The island also somewhat controlled the fate of the continent of Balnibarbi beneath it, but since it was a place of intense speculation without reality it had exerted a deleterious influence upon Balnibarbi, whose capital city contained a museum of magic and fantastic inventions all in a state of incompleteness, while the country roundabout was impoverished and miserably wasted. The senates and councils were troubled with "redundant, ebullient, and other peccant humours, with many diseases of the head and more of the heart; with strong convulsions, with grievous contractions of the nerves and sinews in both hands, but especially the right—" etc. etc. Gulliver offered suggestions for further additions to their activities, in the establishment of a department of informers, spies, prosecutors, witnesses, etc.

Swift's early life would certainly predispose to the development of a stunting bisexuality, as indeed his mature years showed. That there was further a fixation at the anal level and an extreme impairment of genital functioning is indicated in his character and his writings. In addition, he tended to absorb friends into his service in a demanding and possessive fashion—the infantile oral quality of these relationships being partly obscured by the man's real genius which could fascinate and command many of those around him, so that they wanted the more to *be* absorbed by him, but were likely to find themselves considerably burdened after a time. Even Charles Ford, devoted to Swift to the end, seemed ultimately to put geographical barriers between himself and the older man. Two additional developments within this setting are of particular interest, viz., the influence of his special anal character on the texture of the Family Romance, which fate determined in reality and stimulated in fantasy, and the special nature of his relationship to his sister, which in turn left a strong mark on his relations with other women.

On the one hand, he had a prenatal Oedipal situation which was finished decisively even before his birth, and on the other, the events of the postnatal years made it impossible for him really to reach, much less to conclude, any substitute Oedipal relationship at the appropriate period of his development. Parents seemed simply to disappear at the most critical junctures of his life. There seems little doubt but that the young child was aware that he was not the son of the nurse during his early stay in England, a situation in which fantasies about his origin would inevitably have arisen. On his return to Ireland, to his mother and sister, he must have had memories and fantasies regarding the family he had left in England. And again in a few months, he had neither of these families and was left only with the memories of both. No wonder then that he was resentful of his uncle and became a depressed, unproductive, and submissive child.

The anal stamp of his character can only have been established during the period with the nurse in England. It appeared vividly and compellingly throughout his life, in a direct form in his writing and in strong reaction formations of excessive cleanliness and stern ideals in his personal life and speech—so stern, however, as to destroy any acceptance of that margin of genitophallic interest which would otherwise have survived the prohibitive Oedipal situation. It is amply clear from the illustrations already given that Swift considered the spoken word and the written word as miles apart. The spoken word was airy, pure, and of the spirit, a quality which he attributed further especially to vowels. The written word was often discharged in secret and disclaimed until it had proved itself—and appeared “fathered by another,” as he once wrote. He considered the vowels as “airy little creatures all of different voice and features.” By contrast the proper names in *Gulliver's Travels* are heavy with repeated consonants and duplicated syllables overburdened by consonants, e.g., Glubbdbudrib, Luggnagg, Traldragdubh, Glumdalclitch, Clumegnig. These words suggest an onomatopoeic derivation from the sound of drippings and droppings, possibly originating in the overly intense preoccupation with toilet functions, which seemed for the child Jonathan to engulf and then to color his important infantile philosophies.

In addition to these klang and repetitive associations, one should note the great tendency that Swift had to play with words, to pun in a way that would conceal and tell at the same time. He clearly made combined identifications through names which function as in dreams to condense associative connections. The original *Journal to Stella* (1710–1713) which has been much edited in most of its published forms reveals Swift's language in its most infantile oral qualities of endearment, in which "you" is "oo," "dearest" is "dealest," r's and l's get strangely mixed up, and the effect is of a lisping child saying good night in a seductive way, as for example: "Nite dealest richar M.D. Sawey dealest M.D. M.D. M.D. FW, FW, FW ME, ME Poo Pdfr. Lele, lele, lele." The *Journal* is replete with such passages. We shall not translate it all. Swift himself said, "When I am writing in our language, I make up my mouth just as if I were speaking it." "Our richar Gangridge" is "our little language." Of the abbreviations, "M.D." stood for "My dears," "FW" meant either "farewell" or "foolish wenches," "ME" stood for "Madame Elderly" (i.e., Dingley); "Pdfr" was "poor dear foolish rogue" Swift, and "Ppt" stood for "Poor pretty thing" Stella.¹⁰ The "little language" was predominantly baby talk, mixed however with simple code and "pig Latin" contrivances so characteristic of the prepuberty years.

It seems possible that the names "Yahoo" and "Houyhnhnm" are peculiarly condensed "nonsense words," having profoundly to do with Gulliver's effort to find himself, i.e., to achieve some integration of his own identity; and that Yahoo signifies "Who are you?" and Houyhnhnm, the sound of which is close to that of "human" contains also suggestions of the pronouns "you" and "him" and "who" in a jumbled pig-Latin fashion. It is on this voyage that Gulliver is forced to admit his primitive dirty attractions, but attempts to save himself through adopting the rationality of the Houyhnhnms.

The Family Romance has been regarded as occurring in children who are especially strongly attached to the parents and are sexually active and imaginative, yet full of resentment and retaliatory impulses against the parents who have been prohibiting the child's sexual practices. Seeing that the parents indulge in pre-

cisely these activities, which had been labeled as bad and punished in the child, the child suffers disillusionment and is moved to repudiate the parents. He then adopts new, unsexual and lofty parents, to fortify the self and devalue the parents. There is then a kind of masked reversal of the generations out of revenge, but as Freud remarks in his original article on this subject, the ennobled or elevated "adopted" parents really represent the original estimate of the own parents.

It has been the observation of the author that the Family Romance has been furthered in a particularly severe and sometimes malignant form in children whose genital development and Oedipal problem have been gravely distorted by severe anal fixations, and also in those who have had such overpowering and usually anxious mothers that the development of the early ego has been possible only through an early negativistic attitude, an ego organization through opposition, which follows an overly strong attempt at absorption by the mother. In some instances indeed, the early ego negativism and the anal fixation combine—exactly the same sort of anxiously demanding and protective mother tending to promote both in a basically strong and well-endowed child.

Children with emphatic theories of anal birth, like Swift, and with nursery ethics based on approval focused on matters of the toilet, not infrequently utilize their interest in the stool and its smell or gaseous image (as thought or memory) as representative of bad and good, dirty and godly, black and white, low and high, etc. This dichotomizing joins directly with the Family Romance. The foundling, the adopted child—the one not born of the real parents—is either the child of the gypsies abandoned by them or the royal child that has been stolen by them. This theme recurs so often in literature as to bear witness to its universality and its importance.¹¹ Swift almost never wrote or spoke of his father, other than to remark that the father lived long enough to secure his mother's reputation. Obviously the fantasy of bastardy is here at hand, under the mask of humor. His own father had been unsuccessful and abandoned his family by death and by poverty. Neither did Swift write of the nurse except in the indirect ways already quoted. On the other hand, Sir William Temple, the ambassador

and man of the world, emerges quite clearly as the noble, illustrious father, with Swift's own clergyman grandfather as an earlier and lest satisfactory version.

It is known that Swift's relationship with his mother remained cordial throughout and that he visited her even at the expense of making tedious trips on horseback or by stage on his journeys to England. In spite of this she plays little part in his letters, and the one preserved anecdote is an indication of her reversed Oedipal attachment to her son. The year of her death, when he was forty-two, Swift began his *Journal to Stella*, a curious mixture of the memoir type of chronicle of worldly activities and a highly personal communication involving the "little language" which was made up partly of baby talk and partly of abbreviations.

In all the biographies, Jane Swift appears as but a shadow in her brother's life. She was about two years older than Jonathan. We first get a definite statement about her, however, when it is mentioned that she was a member of the Temple household along with Jonathan when he was twenty-two. One of Swift's cousins mentions hostility between the brother and sister, and praises the mother's attitude of fairness between the two. Yet it seems likely that some fantasied image of his sister influenced Swift in the selection of the three women who were to play important parts in his life. The first girl to whom he was definitely attached, and the only one whom he wished to marry, was named Jane and was the sister or cousin ¹² of a college friend. The other two, Stella and Vanessa, both actually named Hester, were the daughters of widows, even as the first Jane (Varina) and his sister Jane were. Although all three young women were considerably younger than he, he tended to state the ages of Stella and Vanessa as two (or more) years older than they were, and also occasionally made them younger. His attachment to them contained a very large degree of identification, as is shown in his wish to make boys of them both, and his repetition of his own history with them: playing the teacher nurse who must instruct them in cleanliness, in reading and writing, and improve their minds generally. With Stella, he even so closely reproduced his own situation as to abduct her in charge of a nurse so that she would live near him in

Ireland. In the meantime, he sent his widowed sister Jane to live with Stella's mother in England. It seemed that some change overtook Swift after his break with Jane Waring (which came at the time of Temple's death). With the denial of any hope for this marriage, the identification with the woman or with an intermediate sex became stronger. (Such identification is certainly more frequently the outcome of a disastrously strong Oedipal attachment with the deformation of character and ideals occurring either at about six years or at puberty. In Swift the whole problem was delayed and complicated.) Possibly complete impotence overtook him then. This, to be sure, is not certain, but is suggested by a few references and especially by his behavior. Stella and Vanessa were both named Hester—which seems possibly an extra determinant for *sister*, this being the more probable since Swift was so moved by alliterative sounds and puns. The sister theme is unmistakably clear in the account of the blocking of the marriage between Swift and Stella, which was to be a marriage in form only, anyway.

Reconstructive interpretations regarding the events of the life, especially events of the first years of a man who has been dead more than two hundred years, may offend many. Yet the offense probably consists in the suggestion by deduction that certain actual events did occur, as indicated by the known characteristics, problems and repetitive actions, supported by the memory traces which remain in so many disguised forms. We are generally less cautious and less perturbed concerning the reverse, namely speculations regarding the effects of known experiences—perhaps because we have such a respect for the objectivity of "factual" data (although it is often misremembered and subjectively distorted) and are less respectful toward the personality traits and attitudes, which must be described rather than enumerated. Yet sometimes these characteristics are of such a nature that the experienced psychoanalyst knows just as definitely as the internist observing later sequelae of tuberculosis or poliomyelitis, that the deformity is the result of specific attacks upon the young organism, not by invading bacteria, but through the agencies of those who have nurtured and trained the infant.

So it was with the "anal quality" of Swift's character: his great

personal immaculateness, his secretiveness, his intense ambition, his pleasure in less obvious dirtiness, his stubborn vengefulness in righteous causes. Such traits of character develop only where the early control of the excretory functions has been achieved under too great stress and often too early. The effect is of a stratum of anxious preoccupation with these functions and their products and derivatives throughout the entire life.

We are justified in concluding that the kidnapping nurse, however devoted to her little charge, was in some way overly conscientious and harsh in her early toilet training, and left this stamp of the nursery morals of the chamber pot forever on his character. That she was ambitious for his intellectual development is indicated by Swift's own belief that on his return to England at about four, he already could read any chapter of the Bible. Whether or not this was literally true, we must probably accept it as an indication both of the child's basic endowment and of the nurse's readiness to develop precocious intellect in him. A kind of linking of the written or printed word with the excretory functions—the two were being mastered and gotten into usable order at the same time—is dramatically apparent in Swift's writing as in the illustrations already given. But when these educative achievements of intellect are being urged or forced before the emotional energy is sufficiently freed from attention to bodily preoccupation, the latter invade the former and the two are indissolubly linked. Words then become endowed with animate qualities, have magic and personalized meanings, and the functioning of speech, reading, and writing may become precociously overly emotionalized and consequently vulnerable to conflictful problems, which produce blockings. We are used to seeing this in spoken language, in the vicissitudes of stuttering and other speech defects; but with Swift it is clear that such an emotional battleground was shifted to the written and the printed word. "I am very angry," wrote Swift to Arbuthnot in 1714, "I have a mind to be very angry and to let my anger break out in some manner that will not please them, at the end of a pen." When Swift was angry but trying to please "them," as in his school days at Kilkenny, he did not break out with a pen, but was compliant, depressed and even thought to be a little stupid.

That the infant Jonathan lived in close bodily intimacy with the nurse, to such a degree and with such continuity as to produce a tendency to overidentify with the woman is strongly indicated, the problem of anatomical differences never being solved with any ordinary degree of stability, and met later by fear of the female body or attempts to endow the girl with masculine attributes, if she is to be in the least either desirable or endurable. This was spoken and written boldly by the adult Swift in his rearings of Stella and of Vanessa, in his admonitions to other young ladies seeking his advice, and in his frequent dissertations on education. This demand that the girl should be masculine could be outspoken in the realm of the mind and emotions, but could not be as specifically stated concerning the body. Here it appeared clearly in a negative form: the emphasis on the dirtiness and repulsiveness of the body apertures, of which the woman possesses one more, and that a conspicuous one, than the man. To Swift, every body aperture, even the pores of the skin, became on occasion a suggestion of anus. That in unconscious or preconscious fantasy Swift sometimes tended to phallacize the woman and to identify the entire body of the child with the female phallus, is apparent in a careful reading of *Gulliver*: the oversize maidens make sport with the tiny man by setting him astride their nipples and bouncing him there; the women similarly have their fun by blowing him in his canoe back and forth upon a narrow channel which has been constructed for him; the little girl nurse carries him in a box on her lap; one time he slips through the fingers of a lady who is handling him and falls in such a way as to get caught in her stomacher from which he dangles in a peculiar position.

This identification of the male with the female phallus is characteristic of the transvestite. While we have no indication of Swift's showing any well-marked transvestite pressures, it is possible that his accepting the robes of the Anglican priest included such a hidden tendency in a way which was acceptable and could be fairly well integrated into his life. Certainly his almost ritualistically compressed demands of the women who were to be close to him, that they should be of intermediate sex, eschewing feminine adorn-

ment and cultivating masculine minds; his attempts to convert them somehow into replicas of himself as a child, while he played the part of the nurse, teaching them how to read and write and keep cleanly bodies—all this has the stamp of fetishism, although he was probably not a fetishist in the ordinary sense of the word.

That Swift was continually obsessed with body imagery which formed the almost ever-present backdrop for his moralizing satire can be readily demonstrated. Such a quotation as that given by Bullitt at the opening of his book is significant:

To this End, I have some Time since, with a World of Pains and Art, dissected the carcass of Humane Nature, and read many useful Lectures upon the several Parts, both Containing and Contained; till at last it smelt so strong I could preserve it no longer. Upon which I have been at great Expense to fit up all the Bones with exact Contexture and in due Symmetry; so that I am ready to show a very compleat Anatomy thereof to all curious Gentlemen and others.

It is quite appropriate that Bullitt's book on Swift is subtitled "The Anatomy of Satire." Swift wrote satirically to prove that the stomach is the seat of honor.

I will say that a writer's stomach, appetite and victuals may be judged from his method, style and subject as certainly as if you were his mess-fellow and sat at table with him. Hence we call a subject dry, a writer insipid, notions crude and undigested, a pamphlet empty and hungry, a style jejune,—and many such-like expressions, plainly alluding to the diet of an author. . . .

[Or:] Air being a heavy Body and therefore . . . continually descending, must needs be more so, when loaden and pressed down by words; which are also Bodies of much Weight and Gravity, as it is manifest from those deep Impressions they make and leave upon us, and therefore must be delivered from a due altitude, or else they will neither carry a good aim nor Fall down with a sufficient force . . . [Swift's satirical account of the "System of Epicurus"].

That somewhere in the course of the intimate association of the infant Jonathan with the anonymous nurse, things took a marked turn for the worse in the development of the child's attachment is probably indicated in the Second Voyage of *Gulliver*:

here, it will be remembered, Gulliver is no longer the oversize important and threatening figure which he has been on his First Voyage, but is now diminutive, helpless, and himself endangered among giants. It is in this land of Brobdingnag that the disgusting nurse appears and, to quote *Gulliver*, she was carrying

a child of a year old in her arms, who immediately spied me and began a squall that you might have heard from London Bridge to Chelsea after the usual oratory of infants, to get me for a plaything. The mother, out of pure indulgence, took me up and put me toward the child, who presently seized me by the middle and got my head in his mouth where I roared so loud that the urchin was frightened and let me drop. I should infallibly have broke my neck if the mother had not held her apron under me. The nurse to quiet the babe made use of a rattle . . . but all in vain.—She was forced to apply the last remedy by giving it suck. I must confess no object ever disgusted me so much as the sight of her monstrous breast which I cannot tell what to compare with, so as to give the curious reader an idea of its bulk, shape, and color. It stood prominent six foot and could not be less than sixteen in circumference. The nipple was about half the bigness of my head, and the hue both of that and the dug so varified, with spots, pimples and freckles that nothing could appear more nauseous: for I had a near sight of her, she sitting down the more conveniently to give suck, and I standing on the table. This made me reflect upon the fair skins of our English ladies who appear so beautiful to us—only because they are our own size, and their defects not to be seen but through a magnifying glass where we find by experiment that the smoothest and whitest skins look rough, coarse, and ill-colored.

It was after this that Gulliver was adopted and protected by the little girl nurse, not yet at puberty, who so charmingly carried him every place with her in a small box made for him.

The passage just quoted depicts rather bitterly Gulliver's plight of finding himself with the tables turned—small, threatened, not only by the adults but by a year-old child, suckled by the loathsome nurse. The description of the breast certainly contains elements of breast awe and envy turned to loathing and with the consequent aim of degrading it. The age of the threatening infant is just the age at which Swift himself was kidnapped and the age at which according to Swift's *Modest Proposal*, the infants of the

poor should be eaten by the rich. It is not chance either, that the tiny Gulliver is in danger of being eaten by the infant, or that he scrupulously recalls in the next breath, as it were, that in the days of his bigness, his own pores and his stubbly beard were seen as disgusting. What would appear to be back of this remarkable passage is that the nurse became pregnant after her return to England and in due time had a child whose suckling upset the infant Jonathan, and aroused in him intensest jealousy, biting resentment and cannibalistic feelings toward the infant—projected by Gulliver as felt toward him by the infant. This too is connected then with Swift's *Modest Proposal* with which he was to fight the battles of the depressed Irish families with satirical fury nearly sixty years later. This thought of benign cannibalism was, however, in the background of Swift's mind quite consciously for many years, as he refers to it in the Scriblerus period (1711–1714).

The image of the disgusting nurse's breast carried with it fear, and a sense of its similarity to a pregnant abdomen and to an adult phallus. That this combined image is rendered less dangerous by being degraded and fecalized is suggested in the passage already quoted. It appears that when Swift refers to the nipple as the *dug*, which he does when he is disgusted, the word itself is very close to the word *dung*. Later, in the Second Voyage, the bad nurse reappears and in a male form, as the evil, kidnapping monkey who drags the diminutive Gulliver out of his little house, and holding him "as a nurse does a child she is going to suckle," squeezed him very hard, stroked his face, and probably mistook him for a very young monkey, later cramming food into his mouth from a bag at one side of the monkey's chaps and patting him when he could not eat—the whole spectacle appearing so ridiculous that the onlookers burst into laughter; the vile stuff having to be picked out by the amiable little girl nurse. Gulliver was exceedingly sick after this, and the monkey was executed by royal decree. This appears clearly to be a homosexual fellatio fantasy, the reverberation of which appeared in Swift's own life in his sickness from "too much stone fruit" at a time when he was first drawn to Sir William Temple.

Two other assaults were made on the helpless Gulliver by evil

male creatures, in this same period: one by a deformed dwarf encountered in the Queen's garden and unwittingly insulted by Gulliver, who naïvely commented on his bodily distortion. The dwarf in revenge shook the apple tree under which Gulliver sat so that the enormous fruit knocked him flat as he was stooping over. Another time, a huge frog hopped into Gulliver's little boat as he was navigating it in his trough, and hopping back and forth over him, deposited its odious slime upon his face and clothing. The largeness of the frog's features made it appear the most deformed animal that could be conceived. Gulliver finally fought with this ugly creature and succeeded in ridding himself of it. Gulliver himself was not without responsibility for some of his animal encounters in this period, especially those with birds. On one occasion he grabbed a swan-sized linnet by the neck with both his hands. The enraged bird beat him around the head with its wings, but was subdued with the help of one of the Queen's servants and subsequently served for dinner. All these adventures are suggestive of further homosexual fantasies and possible incidents, first involving a confusion of breast and phallus, and later taking on other configurations of contact.

This study of Swift was stimulated by an interest in fetishism and the part played in its development by sensations of instability of body size. It is pertinent then to make some brief further references to these questions here. There is no indication that Swift was an overt fetishist, although he shares much in the structure of his personality with those who develop the manifest symptom. The anal fixation was intense and binding, and the genital response so impaired and limited at best, that he was predisposed to later weakness. A retreat from genital sexuality did actually occur in his early adult life, probably beginning with the unhappy relationship to Jane Waring, the first of the goddesses. After this he never again seemed willingly to consider marriage, while his expressed demands were that the women who were closest to him should be as much like boys as possible. His genital demands were probably partly sublimated through his creative writings, but even these showed the stamp of his strong anal character. He did not need a fetish because he resigned from physical genitality. In a sense, his

converting of the women of his choice into boys fulfilled a fetishistic need. Especially Stella was to be the faithful, dependable, unchanging bisexualized object, a cornerstone for his life. With her death he began to go to pieces.

Lemuel Gulliver went a step further than his creator in that he was a married man, who was however continually escaping from his marriage which was so predominantly disgusting to him, though his periodic sojourns at home sufficed sometimes for the depositing of a child with his wife. From his descriptions, however, this hardly seemed an act of love or even of mutual interest. The *Travels* appear as the acting out of Lemuel's masturbatory fantasies, which, like the character of Swift, are closely interwoven with anal preoccupations and ambitions rather than with genital ones.

The problem of changes in body size (expressed as fact in the *Travels* rather than merely as sensations) based on phallic functioning are reflected characteristically onto the total body,¹³ much reinforced by observations of pregnancy, and especially by the theme of reversal of the generations which is very strong. There is less substitution of other body parts for the phallus than is to be seen in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, although there are some disguised references in the Third Voyage, in which the phallic problems are expressed in the medium of thought rather than in that of the body itself.

¹ The Family Romance is a term used for the frequent childhood fantasy that the child is not born of his own parents, but has been adopted, and is really a waif or kidnapped baby, whether of high or low origin.

² Jane Swift suffered from progressive deafness also and during her later years was almost totally deaf.

³ In one of his letters to Charles Ford, Swift complained bitterly of hemorrhoids, but in general he was personally reticent about the state of his bowels in contrast to his complaints of other bodily infirmities.

⁴ For a few examples, see *A Pastoral Dialogue*, *The Lady's Dressing Room*, *A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed*, *Strephon and Chloe*, and others.

⁵ Probably a reference to impotence—both genital and auditory. I. F. Grant-Duff points out the connection between the ears and the genitals in a passage in *A Tale of a Tub*—"if there be a protuberancy of parts in the superior region of the body, as in the ears and nose, there must be a parity

also in the inferior; and therefore in that truly pious age, the males in every assembly—appeared very forward in exposing their ears to view, and the regions about them, because Hyppocrates tells us that when the vein behind the ear happens to be cut a man becomes a eunuch; and the females were nothing backward in beholding and edifying by them.”

That almost any part of the body might temporarily become phallicized is apparent in other passages of the satire.

⁶ A further possible determinant of this will be suggested in the reconstruction of the Whitehaven period of Swift's childhood.

⁷ Since he further attempted to make some substitution of Sir William Temple for his lost father, only to come to bitterness, it is possible that this temple of Gulliver's is an unconscious reference to this. Not only had Swift “killed” his father by his birth, but Temple's son had committed suicide—i.e., murdered himself.

⁸ *Masturprate* and *masturprator* appear as early forms of the word, of uncertain derivation. *Masturbation* appears in the title of a book by Hume in 1766.

⁹ Professor Marjorie Nicolson has given us a most interesting picture of the scientific background of these constructions, and states, “This was no haphazard or fortuitous piece of fancy; the constructive and rational mind of Swift never worked more coolly than during its composition.” The utilization of those current scientific fantasies of Swift's day seems to us absolutely in keeping with elaborated masturbation fantasies, which may occur detached from masturbation or with the peculiarly prolonged and sometimes incomplete masturbation of the latency period in children who have especially little resolution of the Oedipus complex. The child, in the latency period, is especially involved with understanding the mechanics of the world around him, and when this is combined with his unresolved masturbation urges, the fantasies of the mechanics of the body are combined with unusual intensity with similar ones regarding external objects and surroundings. Such thinking may last throughout life and is sometimes valuably productive. That Swift saw the dangers of these ruminations limited to masturbatory states is obvious from his descriptions of the Laputans.

¹⁰ For discussion of the “little language,” see Ehrenpreis.

¹¹ Cf. *Prince and the Pauper* and *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

¹² It is not clear whether the supposition that Jane Waring was the sister of Swift's roommate at Trinity (which is stated as a fact in the earlier biographies), was due to the assumption of the biographers or to Swift's referring to her in this way. Examination of the accounts of the Waring family indicate that she was probably a cousin.

¹³ This was especially emphasized in Ferenczi's early article on the “Gulliver Fantasies.”

ERICH FROMM

Franz Kafka

AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE of a work of art written in symbolic language is Kafka's *The Trial*. As in so many dreams, events are presented, each of which is in itself concrete and realistic; yet the whole is impossible and fantastic. The novel, in order to be understood, must be read as if we listened to a dream—a long complicated dream in which external events happen in space and time, being representations of thoughts and feelings within the dreamer, in this case the novel's hero, K.

The novel begins with a somewhat startling sentence: "Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning."¹

K., we might say, begins the dream with an awareness that he is "arrested." What does "arrested" mean? It is an interesting word which has a double meaning. To be arrested can mean to be taken into custody by police officers and to be arrested can mean to be stopped in one's growth and development. An accused man is "arrested" by the police, and an organism is "arrested" in its normal development. The manifest story uses "arrested" in the former sense. Its symbolic meaning, however, is to be under-

stood in the latter. K. has an awareness that he is arrested and blocked in his own development.

—In a masterful little paragraph, Kafka explains why K. was arrested. This is how K. spent his life: “That spring K. had been accustomed to pass his evenings in this way: after work whenever possible—he was usually in his office until nine—he would take a short walk, alone or with some of his colleagues, and then go to a beer hall, where until eleven he sat at a table patronized mostly by elderly men. But there were exceptions to this routine, when, for instance, the Manager of the Bank, who highly valued his diligence and reliability, invited him for a drive or for dinner at his villa. And once a week K. visited a girl called Elsa, who was on duty all night till early morning as a waitress in a cabaret and during the day received her visitors in bed.”

It was an empty, routinized life, sterile, without love and without productiveness. Indeed, he was arrested, and he heard the voice of his conscience tell him of his arrest and of the danger that threatened his personality.

The second sentence tells us that “his landlady’s cook, who always brought him his breakfast at eight o’clock, failed to appear on this occasion. That had never happened before.” This detail seems unimportant. In fact, it is somewhat incongruous that after the startling news of his arrest such a trivial detail as his breakfast not having come should be mentioned; but, as in so many dreams, this seemingly insignificant detail contains important information about K.’s character. K. was a man with a “receptive orientation.” All his strivings went in the direction of wanting to receive from others—never to give or to produce.²

He was dependent on others, who should feed him, take care of him, and protect him. He was still a child dependent on his mother—expecting everything from her help, using her and manipulating her. As is characteristic of people of this orientation, his main concern was to be pleasant and nice so that people, and in particular women, would give him what he needed; and his greatest fear was that people might become angry and withhold their gifts. The source of all good was believed to be outside, and the problem of living was to avoid the risk of losing the good graces of

this source. The result is an absence of the feeling of his own strength and intense fear of being threatened with desertion by the person or persons whom he is dependent upon.

K. did not know who accused him or what he was accused of. He asked: "Who could these men be? What were they talking about? What authority could they represent?" A little later, when he talked with the "Inspector," a man higher up in the hierarchy of the court, the voice became somewhat more articulate. K. asked him all sorts of questions having nothing to do with the main question of what he was accused of, and in answering him the Inspector made a statement which contained one of the most important insights that could be given K. at that point—and for that matter to anyone who is troubled and seeks help. The Inspector said, "However, if I can't answer your questions, I can at least give you a piece of advice; think less about us and of what is to happen to you, think more about yourself instead." K. did not understand the Inspector's meaning. He did not see that the problem was within himself, that he was the only one who could save him, and the fact that he could not accept the Inspector's advice indicated his ultimate defeat.

This first scene of the story closes with another statement by the Inspector which throws a great deal of light on the nature of the accusation and of the arrest. "You'll be going to the Bank now, I suppose?" "To the Bank?" asked K. "I thought I was under arrest? . . . How can I go to the Bank, if I am under arrest?" "Ah, I see," said the Inspector, who had already reached the door. "You have misunderstood me. You are under arrest, certainly, but that need not hinder you from going about your business. You won't be hampered in carrying on the ordinary course of your life." "Then being arrested isn't so very bad," said K., going up to the Inspector. "I never suggested that it was," said the Inspector. "But in that case it would seem there was no particular necessity to tell me about it," said K., moving still closer.

Realistically, this could hardly happen. If a man is arrested, he is not permitted to continue his business life as usual nor in fact, as we see later, any of his other ordinary activities. This

strange arrangement expressed symbolically that his business activities and everything else he did were of such a nature as not really to be touched by his arrest as a human being. Humanely speaking, he was almost dead, but he could continue his life as a bank official just the same, because this activity was completely separated from his existence as a human being.

K. had a vague awareness that he was wasting his life and rotting away fast. From here on, the whole novel deals with his reaction to this awareness and with the efforts he makes to defend and to save himself. The outcome was tragic; although he heard the voice of his conscience, he did not understand it. Instead of trying to understand the real reason for his arrest, he tended to escape from any such awareness. Instead of helping himself in the only way he could help himself—by recognizing the truth and trying to change—he sought help where it could not be found—on the outside, from others, from clever lawyers, from women whose “connections” he could use, always protesting his innocence and silencing the voice that told him he was guilty.

Perhaps he could have found a solution had it not been for the fact that his moral sense was confused. He knew only one kind of moral law: the strict authority whose basic commandment was “You must obey.” He knew only the “authoritarian conscience,” to which obedience is the greatest virtue and disobedience the greatest crime. He hardly knew that there was another kind of conscience—the humanistic conscience—which is our own voice calling us back to ourselves.³

In the novel, both kinds of conscience are represented symbolically: the humanistic conscience by the Inspector and later by the Priest; the authoritarian conscience by the court, the judges, the assistants, the crooked lawyers, and all others connected with the case. K.’s tragic mistake was that, although he heard the voice of his humanistic conscience, he mistook it for the voice of the authoritarian conscience and defended himself against the accusing authorities, partly by submission and partly by rebellion, when he should have fought for himself in the name of his humanistic conscience.

The "court" is described as despotic, corrupt and filthy; its procedure not based on reason or justice. The kind of lawbooks the judges used (shown him by the wife of an attendant) were a symbolic expression of this corruption. They were old dog-eared volumes, the cover of one was almost completely split down the middle, the two halves were held together by mere threads. "How dirty everything is here!" said K., shaking his head, and the woman had to wipe away the worst of the dust with her apron before K. would put out his hand to touch the books. He opened the first of them and found an indecent picture. A man and a woman were sitting naked on a sofa, the obscene intention of the draftsman was evident enough, yet his skill was so small that nothing emerged from the picture save the all-too-solid figures of a man and a woman sitting rigidly upright and, because of the bad perspective, apparently finding the utmost difficulty even in turning toward each other. K. did not look at any of the other pages, but merely glanced at the title page of the second book. It was a novel entitled, *How Grete Was Plagued by Her Husband Hans*. "These are the lawbooks that are studied here," said K. "These are the men who are supposed to sit in judgment on me."

Another expression of the same corruption was that the attendant's wife was used sexually by one of the judges and one of the law students and that neither she nor her husband was permitted to protest. There is an element of rebelliousness in K.'s attitude toward the Court and a deep sympathy in the Law-Court Attendant who, after having given K. "a confidential look such as he had not yet ventured in spite of all his friendliness," said, "A man can't help being rebellious." But the rebelliousness alternated with submission. It never dawned upon K. that the moral law is not represented by the authoritarian court but by his own conscience.

To say that this idea never dawns upon him would not be quite correct. Once toward the end of his journey he came as close to the truth as he ever did. He heard the voice of his humanistic conscience represented by the priest in the Cathedral. He had gone to the Cathedral to meet a business acquaintance to whom he was to show the city, but this man had not kept the appointment and K. found himself alone in the Cathedral, a little

forlorn and puzzled until suddenly an unambiguous and inescapable voice cried: "Joseph K.!"

K. started and stared at the ground before him. For the moment he was still free, he could continue on his way and vanish through one of the small dark wooden doors that faced him at no great distance. It would simply indicate that he had not understood the call, or that he had understood it and did not care. But if he were to turn round he would be caught, for that would amount to an admission that he had understood it very well, that he was really the person addressed, and that he was ready to obey. Had the priest called his name a second time K. would certainly have gone on, but since there was a persistent silence, though he stood waiting a long time, he could not help turning his head a little just to see what the priest was doing. The priest was standing calmly in the pulpit as before, yet it was obvious that he had observed K.'s turn of the head. It would have been like a childish game of hide-and-seek if K. had not turned right round to face him. He did so, and the priest beckoned him to come nearer. Since there was now no need for evasion, K. hurried back—he was both curious and eager to shorten the interview—with long flying strides toward the pulpit. At the first rows of seats he halted, but the priest seemed to think the distance still too great, he stretched out an arm and pointed with sharply bent forefinger to a spot immediately before the pulpit. K. followed this direction too; when he stood on the spot indicated he had to bend his head far back to see the priest at all. "You are Joseph K.," said the priest, lifting one hand from the balustrade in a vague gesture. "Yes," said K., thinking how frankly he used to give his name and what a burden it had recently become to him; nowadays people he had never seen before seemed to know his name. How pleasant it was to have to introduce oneself before being recognized! "You are an accused man," said the priest in a very low voice. "Yes," said K. "So I have been informed." "Then you are the man I seek," said the priest. "I am the prison chaplain." "Indeed," said K. "I had you summoned here," said the priest, "to have a talk with you." "I didn't know that," said K. "I came here to show an Italian round the Cathedral." "A mere detail," said the priest. "What is that in your hand? Is it a prayer book?" "No," replied K., "it is an album of sights worth seeing in the town." "Lay it down," said the priest. K. pitched it away so violently that it flew open and slid some way along the floor with disheveled leaves. "Do you know that your case is going badly?" asked the priest. "I have that idea myself," said K.

"I've done what I could, but without any success so far. Of course, my first petition hasn't been presented yet." "How do you think it will end?" asked the priest. "At first I thought it must turn out well," said K., "but now I frequently have my doubts. I don't know how it will end. Do you?" "No," said the priest, "but I fear it will end badly. You are held to be guilty. Your case will perhaps never get beyond a lower Court. Your guilt is supposed, for the present, at least, to have been proved." "But I am not guilty," said K.; "It's a misunderstanding. And, if it comes to that, how can any man be called guilty? We are all simply men here, one as much as the other." "That is true," said the priest, "but that's how all guilty men talk." "Are you prejudiced against me too?" asked K. "I have no prejudices against you," said the priest. "I thank you," said K.; "but all the others who are concerned in these proceedings are prejudiced against me. They are influencing even outsiders. My position is becoming more and more difficult." "You are misinterpreting the facts of the case," said the priest. "The verdict is not so suddenly arrived at, the proceedings only gradually merge into the verdict." "So that's how it is," said K., letting his head sink. "What is the next step you propose to take in the matter?" asked the priest. "I'm going to get more help," said K., looking up again to see how the priest took this statement. "There are several possibilities I haven't explored yet." "You cast about too much for outside help," said the priest disapprovingly, "especially from women. Don't you see that it isn't the right kind of help?" "In some cases, even in many, I could agree with you," said K., "but not always. Women have great influence. If I could move some women I know to join forces in working for me, I couldn't help winning through. Especially before this Court, which consists almost entirely of petticoat-hunters. Let the Examining Magistrate see a woman in the distance and he almost knocks down his desk and the defendant in his eagerness to get at her." The priest drooped over the balustrade, apparently feeling for the first time the oppressiveness of the canopy above his head. What could have happened to the weather outside? There was no longer even a murky daylight; black night had set in. All the stained glass in the great window could not illumine the darkness of the wall with one solitary glimmer of light. And at this very moment the verger began to put out the candles on the high altar, one after another. "Are you angry with me?" asked K. of the priest. "It may be that you don't know the nature of the Court you are serving." He got no answer. "These are only my personal experiences," said K. There was still no answer from above. "I wasn't trying to insult you,"

said K. And at that the priest shrieked from the pulpit! "Can't you see anything at all?" It was an angry cry, but at the same time sounded like the involuntary shriek of one who sees another fall and is startled out of himself.

The priest knew what the real accusation against K. was, and he also knew that his case would end badly. At this point K. had a chance to look into himself and to ask what the real accusation was, but, consistent with his previous orientation, he was interested only in finding out where he could get more help. When the priest said disapprovingly that he casts about too much for outside help, K.'s only response was fear that the priest was angry. Now the priest became really angry, but it was the anger of love felt by a man who saw another fall, knowing he could help himself but could not be helped. There was not much more the priest could tell him. When K. moved in the direction of the doorway, the priest asked, "Do you want to leave already?" Although at that moment K. had not been thinking of leaving, he answered at once, "Of course, I must go. I'm the assistant manager of a Bank, they're waiting for me. I only came here to show a business friend from abroad round the Cathedral." "Well," said the priest, reaching out his hand to K., "then go." "But I can't find my way out alone in this darkness," said K.

K.'s was indeed the tragic dilemma of the person who could not find his way alone in the darkness and who insisted that only others could guide him. He sought help but he rejected the only help the priest could offer him. Out of his own dilemma he could not understand the priest. He asked, "Don't you want anything more to do with me?" "No," said the priest. "You were so friendly to me for a time," said K., "and explained so much to me, and now you let me go as if you cared nothing about me." "But you have to leave now," said the priest. "Well, yes," said K., "you must see that I can't help it." "You must first see that I can't help being what I am," said the priest. "You are the prison chaplain," said K., groping his way nearer to the priest again; his immediate return to the Bank was not so necessary as he had made out; he could quite well stay longer. "That means I belong to the Court," said the priest. "So why should I make any claims upon you?"

The Court makes no claims upon you. It receives you when you come, and it relinquishes you when you go."

The priest made it quite clear that his attitude was the opposite of authoritarianism. While he wanted to help K. out of love for his fellow men, he himself had no stake in the outcome of K.'s case. K.'s problem, in the priest's view, was entirely his own. If he refused to see, he must remain blind—because no one sees the truth except by himself.

What is so confusing in the novel is the fact that it is never said that the moral law represented by the priest and the law represented by the court are different. On the contrary, in the manifest story the priest, being the prison chaplain, is part of the court system. But this confusion in the story symbolizes the confusion in K.'s own heart. To him the two are one, and just because he is not able to distinguish between them, he remains caught in the battle with the authoritarian conscience and cannot understand himself.

One year elapsed after K. had the first inkling of his arrest. It was now the evening before his thirty-first birthday and his case had been lost. Two men came to fetch him for the execution. In spite of his frantic efforts, he had failed to ask the right question. He had not found out what he was accused of, who accused him, and what was the way to save himself.

The story ends, as so many dreams do, in a violent nightmare. But while the executioners went through the grotesque formalities of preparing their knives, K. had for the first time an insight into his own problem. "I always wanted to snatch at the world with twenty hands, and not for a very laudable motive, either. That was wrong, and am I to show now that not even a whole year's struggling with my case has taught me anything? Am I to leave this world as a man who shies away from all conclusions? Are people to say of me after I am gone that at the beginning of my case I wanted it to finish, and at the end of it wanted it to begin again? I don't want that to be said."

For the first time K. was aware of his greediness and of the sterility of his life. For the first time he could see the possibility of friendship and human solidarity:

His glance fell on the top story of the house adjoining the quarry. With a flicker as of a light going up, the casements of a window there suddenly flew open; a human figure, faint and insubstantial at that distance and that height, leaned abruptly far forward and stretched both arms still farther. Who was it? A friend? A good man? Someone who sympathized? Someone who wanted to help? Was it one person only? Or were they all there? Was help at hand? Were there some arguments in his favor that had been overlooked? Of course there must be. Logic is doubtless unshakable, but it cannot withstand a man who wants to go on living. Where was the Judge whom he had never seen? Where was the High Court, to which he had never penetrated? He raised his hands and spread out all his fingers.

While all his life K. had been trying to find the answers, or rather to be given answers by others, at this moment he asked questions and the right questions. It was only the terror of dying that gave him the power to visualize the possibility of love and friendship and, paradoxically, at the moment of dying he had, for the first time, faith in life.

¹ This and all subsequent quotations are from Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, (New York, 1931).

² Cf. the description of the receptive orientation in the author's *Man for Himself*.

³ Cf. the chapter on humanistic and authoritarian conscience in *Man for Himself*.

ERNEST JONES

The Death of Hamlet's Father

WHEN A POET takes an old theme from which to create a work of art it is always interesting, and often instructive, to note the respects in which he changes elements in the story. Much of what we glean of Shakespeare's personality is derived from such studies, the direct biographical details being so sparse. The difference in the accounts given in *Hamlet* of the way the King had died from that given in the original story is so striking that it would seem worth-while to look closer at the matter.

The most obvious difference is that in the Saxo-Belleforest saga the murder is a public one, with Shakespeare a secret one. We do not know, however, who made this change, since an English play called *Hamlet*, thought to be written by Kyd, was extant some twelve years before Shakespeare wrote his; and he doubtless used it as well as the Belleforest version. That play no longer exists except in a much later and much distorted German version, but a Ghost probably appeared in it, and one can hardly imagine any other function for him than to disclose a secret murder. There is reason to suppose that Shakespeare may himself have had a hand in the Kyd play, but at all events he made the best possible use of the alteration.

In the old saga Claudius (there called Feng) draws his sword on his brother the King (Horvendil)¹ at a banquet and slays him "with many wounds." He explains to the assembled nobles that he has done this to protect his sister-in-law (Geruth) from ill-treatment and imminent peril of her life at the hands of her husband—a pretext evidently a reflection of the infant's sadistic conception of coitus. Incidentally, in the Saxo saga (though not with Belleforest), there had here been no previous adultery with the Queen, so that Feng is the sole villain, and Amleth, unlike Hamlet, unhesitatingly kills him and reigns in his stead as soon as he can overcome the external obstacles. In *Hamlet*, as is well known, the plot is intensified by the previous incestuous adultery of the Queen, which convulses Hamlet at least as much as his father's murder and results in an animus against women that complicates his previously simple task.

In the *Hamlet* play, on the other hand, Claudius disclaims all responsibility for his brother's death and spreads a somewhat improbable story of his having been stung to death by a serpent while sleeping in an orchard. How he knew this we are not told, nor why the adder possessed this quite unwonted deadliness. There is much to be said about that "orchard," but we may assume that it symbolizes the woman in whose arms the king was murdered. The Ghost's version was quite different. According to him, Claudius had found him asleep and poured a juice of hebana into his ears, a still more improbable story from a medical point of view; he further tells us that the poison rapidly spread through his system resulting in "all his smooth body being barked about most lazar-like with vile and loathsome crust." Presumably its swift action prevented him from informing anyone of what had befallen him.

The source of this mysterious poison has been traced as follows.² Shakespeare seems to have taken the name, incidentally misspelling it, from the juice of "hebon," mentioned in a play of Marlowe's, who himself had added an initial letter to the "ebon" (ebony) of which the walls of the God of Sleep were composed (Ovid). Shakespeare apparently went on to confound this narcotic with henbane (hyoscyamus), which at that time was believed to cause mortification and turn the body black.³ Two interesting beliefs connect-

ing henbane with the ear are mentioned by Pliny: (1) that it is a remedy for earache, and (2) when poured into the ear it causes mental disorder.

The coarse Northern butchery is thus replaced by a surreptitious Italianate form of murder, a fact that has led to many inquiries, which do not concern us here, concerning Italian influence on Shakespeare. The identical method is employed in the Play Scene, where a nephew murders his uncle, who was resting after coitus, by dropping poison into his ear and immediately afterwards espouses the widow *à la* Richard III. Hamlet says he got the Gonzago story from an Italian play, but no such play has yet been traced. But there had been two instances of murder in an unhappy Gonzaga family. In 1538 a famous Duke of Urbino, who was married to a Gonzaga, died under somewhat suspicious circumstances. Poison was suspected, and his barber was believed to have poured a lotion into his ears on a number of occasions. So the story goes: whether poison thus administered is lethal to anyone with intact tympani is a matter we must leave to the toxicologists. At all events the Duke's son got the unfortunate barber torn in pieces by pincers and then quartered. In the course of this proceeding the barber asserted he had been put on to commit the foul deed by a Luigi⁴ Gonzaga, a relative of the Duke's by marriage. For political and legal reasons, however, Luigi was never brought to trial.⁵ Furthermore, in 1592 the Marchese Rudolf von Castiglione got eight bravos to murder his uncle the Marchese Alfonso Gonzaga, a relative of the Duke of Mantua. Rudolf had wished to marry his uncle's daughter and had been refused; he himself was murdered eight months later.

The names used make it evident that Shakespeare was familiar with the story of the earlier Gonzaga murder, as he possibly was with the later one too. The "poison in the ear" story must have appealed to him, since he not only used it in the Gonzago Play Scene—where it would be appropriate—but also in the account of Hamlet's father's death.

If we translate them into the language of symbolism the Ghost's story is not so dissimilar from that of Claudius. To the unconscious, "poison" signifies any bodily fluid charged with evil intent, while

the serpent has played a well-known role ever since the Garden of Eden. The murderous assault had therefore both aggressive and erotic components, and we note that it was Shakespeare who introduced the latter (serpent). Furthermore, that the ear is an unconscious equivalent for anus is a matter for which I have adduced ample evidence elsewhere.⁶ So we must call Claudius' attack on his brother both a murderous aggression and a homosexual assault.

Why did Shakespeare give this curious turn to a plain story of envious ambition? The theme of homosexuality itself does not surprise us in Shakespeare. In a more or less veiled form a pronounced femininity and a readiness to interchange the sexes are prominent characteristics of his plays, and doubtless of his personality also. I have argued ⁷ that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* as a more or less successful abreaction of the intolerable emotions aroused by the painful situation he depicts in his Sonnets, his betrayal by both his beloved young noble and his mistress. In life he apparently smothered his resentment and became reconciled to both betrayers. Artistically his response was privately to write the Sonnets (in the later publication of which he had no hand) and publicly to compose *Hamlet* not long afterwards, a play gory enough to satisfy all varieties of revenge.

The episode raises again the vexed question of the relation between active and passive homosexuality. Nonanalysts who write on this topic are apt to maintain that they represent two different in-born types, but this assertion gives one an unsatisfied feeling of improbability, and analytic investigation confirms these doubts by demonstrating numerous points of contact between the two attitudes. Certainly Claudius' assault was active enough; sexually it signified turning the victim into a female, i.e. castrating him. Hamlet himself, as Freud ⁸ pointed out long ago, was unconsciously identified with Claudius, which was the reason why he was unable to denounce and kill him. So the younger brother attacking the older is simply a replica of the son-father conflict, and the complicated poisoning story really represents the idea of the son castrating his father. But we must not forget that it is done in an erotic fashion. Now Hamlet's conscious attitude toward his father was a feminine one, as shown by his exaggerated adoration and his ad-

juring Gertrude to love such a perfect hero instead of his brother. In Freud's opinion homosexuality takes its origin in narcissism,⁹ so that it is always a mirror-love; Hamlet's father would therefore be his own idea of himself. That is why, in such cases, as with Hamlet, suicide is so close to murder.

My analytic experience, simplified for the present purpose, impels me to the following reconstruction of homosexual development. Together with the narcissism a feminine attitude toward the father presents itself as an attempted solution of the intolerable murderous and castrating impulses aroused by jealousy. These may persist, but when the fear of the self-castration implied gains the upper hand, i.e. when the masculine impulse is strong, the original aggression reasserts itself—but this time under the erotic guise of active homosexuality.

According to Freud, Hamlet was inhibited ultimately by his repressed hatred of his father. We have to add to this the homosexual aspect of his attitude, so that Love and Hate, as so often, both play their part.

¹ It was Shakespeare who changed this name to Hamlet, thus emphasizing the identification of son and father.

² See Hy. Bradley, *Modern Language Review* (1920), XV, 85.

³ W. Thislton-Dyer, *Shakespeare's England*, Vol. I, p. 509.

⁴ From whom Shakespeare perhaps got the name Lucianus for the murderer in the Play Scene.

⁵ See G. Bullough, "The Murder of Gonzago," *Modern Language Review* (1935), XXX, 433.

⁶ *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis* (1923), pp. 341-6.

⁷ *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949).

⁸ *Die Traumdeutung* (1900), S. 183.

⁹ *Collected Papers*, Vol. II, p. 241.

THEODOR REIK

The Three Women in a Man's Life

THERE IS AN unknown melody that has been haunting me now for several days. It appears sometimes very clearly and sometimes only the first bars are heard by the inner ear as a faint echo. It came like an unannounced guest one has once known, but whose name one has forgotten. Its repeated emergence irks me now and I try to turn it away as if the unrecognized guest had stayed too long and has become wearisome. If I but knew what that tune is! I am searching in vain in my memory. I must have heard it long, long ago. Where was it?

Was it not in the Vienna Opera? It occurs to me that the melody I do not recognize must have something to do with my father. . . . My memory calls his image up . . . his face . . . his sidewhiskers . . . his beard was like Kaiser Franz Josef's . . . or rather like Jacques Offenbach's. . . . The image of the composer emerges quite distinctly as if it were a photograph. . . . The penetrating eyes and the pince-nez on a ribbon. . . . And then I know suddenly what the melody is: the aria of Antonia from *The Tales of Hoffmann*. As if a floodgate had been opened, an abundance of images emerges. When my sister and I went to the Vienna Opera for the first time in 1901, I was 13 years old.

We had heard our father speak about *The Tales of Hoffmann* before. At the first performance of Offenbach's opera in 1881 a terrible fire had consumed the Vienna Ringtheater. Many hundreds of people had perished; my father had saved himself by jumping from a window. Many superstitious persons in our city, at that time, had tried to establish a connection between the catastrophe and the personality of the composer. They said Offenbach had an "evil eye" whose glances had magical power to harm people. They called him a "*jettatore*," meaning a wicked sorcerer. Poor Offenbach, whose picture we had seen and in which we had discovered a likeness to our father, had in fact not lived to witness the opening performance of his opera.

The Tales of Hoffmann had not been performed in Vienna for a long time, in fact, not until 1901. My sister and I were agog with anticipation. In those days, the performances of the Opera were a frequent subject of discussion in the homes of the middle-class people of musical Vienna. We had often heard the orchestra praised and the individual singers evaluated. Then there was the new director whose artistic and creative zeal had revolutionized the old institution and who had become the subject of bitter contention and ardent enthusiasm. Every one of the performances which he conducted aroused a storm of controversy: his lack of respect for tradition which he had once characterized as "sloppiness," his startling innovations, his musicianship, and his inspired energy which demanded perfection from himself and those working with him. His name, which we heard spoken so often at home, was Gustav Mahler.

Memories emerge of our first night at the Opera House; the crowded theater, the box reserved for the Court, the tuning of the instruments. The lights are out now; only stage and orchestra are illuminated. Hurrying toward the conductor's stand we see a man of small stature with the ascetic features of a medieval monk. His eyes are flashing behind his glasses. He glances, as if in fury, at the audience that applauds his appearance. He raises the baton and throws himself, with arms uplifted, ecstatically almost, into the flood of melody. Gustav Mahler.

2

Slowly the curtain rises. There is a student's tavern, the young men drinking, boasting, and jesting. Hoffmann, the poet and musician, appears on the scene and is teased by his comrades because he has fallen in love once again. They ask him to recount the story of his foolish amours and he begins: "The name of my first beloved was Olympia. . . ."

The play takes us back, in the ensuing act, to what happened to young E. T. A. Hoffmann as he met Olympia in the home of the famous scientist Spallanzani, whose daughter she appears to be. It is love at first sight, with no realization that she is not a living woman but an automatic doll, fashioned with the utmost skill. The charming girl is seen at a party. When Spallanzani pushes a concealed button, she speaks, she walks, she sings and dances. Hoffmann confesses his love for her and is elated when he hears her "yes." She dances with him until exhausted, then her father or maker leads her to her chamber. Then, a malignant looking man by the name of Coppelius enters in a rage and claims to have been swindled by Spallanzani. Vengefully, he manages to slip into Olympia's chamber and to smash the magnificent doll Spallanzani's cleverness had wrought. E. T. A. Hoffmann is made the butt of the assembled guests' ridicule for having fallen in love with a lifeless automaton.

The second act takes place in Venice, at the home of beautiful Giulietta, who receives the young poet as graciously as she does all the other young men to whom she grants her favors. Dapertutto, a demoniac figure, bribes the siren to make a play for Hoffmann's love. She promises to the ardent poet the key to her bedroom. He, however, gets into a fight with another of her lovers and kills him. She jilts Hoffmann, who finds her chamber deserted and spies her, in the embraces of another, entering a gondola which floats down the Canalo Grande.

The third act is laid in Munich, in the house of old Crespel, with whose fair daughter, Antonia, Hoffmann has fallen in love. The girl has inherited her mother's beautiful singing voice but also

her fatal disease, consumption. Father and lover plead with her not to sing. But Dr. Mirakel, a physician and an evil sorcerer, makes her doubtful again when he reproaches her for giving up a promising career. In her presence he conjures up the spirit of her dead mother who joins with Dr. Mirakel in his exhortations to break her promise and to continue with her singing. Antonia yields and dies while singing her aria. Dr. Mirakel, then, disappears, emitting peals of triumphant, mocking laughter, leaving father and lover prey to their despair.

In the epilogue, we witness the same scene as in the beginning: the students singing and jesting, shouting "bravo" to Hoffmann's tale of his thwarted love. He, in turn, proceeds to drown his grief in drink.

When I went to the opera that evening, I had expected a light and amusing operetta in the manner of *Belle Hélène* or *Orphée aux Enfers*, with sparkling melodies, debunking gods and heroes of Greek mythology. But this opera was so different. It made a deep impression on the thirteen-year-old boy. For many weeks afterwards, some tune from *The Tales of Hoffmann*, such as the charming aria of Olympia, the chorus of the guests, the moving aria of Antonia, haunted me. Images from the performance recurred to the inner eye: there were the evil and demoniac figures of Coppélius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel, played by the same singer. They appeared as personifications of a mysterious power that destroys again and again the young poet's love and happiness. Also, the image of the pale face of Gustav Mahler himself reappeared, looking like a sorcerer, like a spiritualized Dr. Mirakel, performing wonders with the orchestra. And then the female figures, played, as they were, by the same singer: Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia. They appeared to be three women in one, a triad which is always the same. There was, in the boy, a foreknowledge or presentiment of a deeper meaning behind the succession of the three loves and their tragic endings, but this concealed meaning eluded him whenever he tried to penetrate the mystery.

3

When I heard the opera again, almost twenty years later, that which had been dark, became transparent. It was like developing an old photographic plate. The chemical processes to which the plate had been subjected in the meantime had made it possible to obtain now a positive print. The triad had revealed its secret in the light of what I had learned and experienced in psychoanalysis.

In every one of his attachments, young Hoffmann had met an antagonist called variously, Coppélius, Dapertutto and Dr. Mirakel. This secret opponent was out to defeat the poet; he turned the beloved against Hoffmann or destroyed her. At the beginning we see Hoffmann infatuated or in love. We see him broken in spirit, in misery and despair, at the end. The easily inflamed passion of the young man meets an antagonistic power, self-deceiving and self-harming, which causes him to fail. That which makes him luckless and miserable is conceived as outside forces. But is it not rather some agent within himself emerging from dark subterranean depths? The sinister figures, who blind him about Olympia, who cause Giulietta to jilt him, and to bring death and destruction to Antonia, are personifications only of a foiling power which is an unconscious part of Hoffmann himself. This hidden factor which frustrates him each time in the end is operative already in his choices of his love objects. As if led by a malicious destiny, as if thwarted by a demon, he falls in love each time with a woman who is unsuitable: Olympia, a lifeless automaton, Giulietta, a vixen, and Antonia, doomed from the beginning.

The personalities of the three women, themselves, as well as the sequence of their succession, seem to express a concealed significance, hint at a symbolic meaning behind the events. It is as if the author was presenting not only the particular case of this German poet and musician, Hoffmann, but beyond that a situation of universal significance. Does the play want to say that every young man follows such a pattern in his loves? Yet our feeling balks at such a meaning. We find ourselves at a kind of psychological impasse, both willing and recalcitrant to believe, feeling a fusion

and confusion of emotions which oppose each other. We sense there is a hidden general meaning; yet what happens to E. T. A. Hoffmann, especially his loves for those strange female characters, is so specific and personal that it cannot relate to us.

The closest coincidence to the love life of the average young man may be seen in Hoffmann's infatuation for Giulietta, the heartless, Venetian courtesan, who wants to enslave him for reasons of her own. Her charm fills him with consuming fire, he puts himself in bondage to her ready to sacrifice all to his passion. Need we search here for a deeper meaning? We have the lady of easy or absent virtue, who plays with all men and with whom all men play. Here we really have a type which is to be found in every man's life; the object of uninhibited sexual wishes, the mistress desirable in the flesh.

But what should we think of Olympia? We meet here with an odd love object, something almost incredible. The girl walks and laughs, speaks, dances and sings. She is, as Hoffmann discovers later and too late, really only an automaton, which does not function unless her clever creator pushes certain buttons. Where is the place of such a strange creature in every man's life? Should we assume that the author wanted to give an exaggerated caricature of the baby-faced, doll-like darling who has no life of her own, the girl without brains and personality, the society glamour girl, the plaything and toy? Such an interpretation is tempting, it makes rational sense, but remains unconvincing. And Antonia? Should she be regarded as the woman who hesitates between choosing a man or a career? But her character does not tally with this concept. The outstanding feature, after all, is the menace of death connected with her singing.

If we tentatively accept these rational concepts, we arrive at the conclusion that the author wanted to portray three typical figures who play a role in a young man's life. They are the child-woman, the siren, and the artist, or a woman who oscillates between wanting to be a wife or to follow a career. Olympia, Giulietta, and Antonia would then represent three types whom every young man meets and finds attractive in different ways, appealing as they do to the playful, the sensual, and the affectionate part in him. Was this

in the writer's mind when he created the three women, representative of their sex? Have we now reached a better understanding?

If we have, we do not feel satisfied yet. Something warns us against contenting ourselves with such an interpretation. Should we give up our attempts at searching for a deeper meaning in the three female figures? Should we not rather take them at the value of their beautiful faces? We cannot do it. We cannot escape the haunting impression of a concealed significance. There is the repetitive character in spite of individual variations, the hidden logic which gives the play its tragic atmosphere. The sinister figures of the mysterious antagonist intensify the impression. They give to the events on the stage a sense of something preordained and fateful which cannot be accidental. Other traits too make it evident that the author was well aware of the veiled significance, for instance, the remark of one of the students after Hoffmann has told the story of his loves: "I understand, three dramas in one drama."

Besides and beyond such small but telling items in the text, there is the force of this music in which the secret power of the inevitable, the shadow of near death, and the spell of destiny have been transformed into song. This power is felt in the playful and sparkling tunes of the students, in the Mozartian entrance of the guests, in the sweet aria of Olympia, and in the alluring barcarole of Giulietta. It laughs and mocks in Dr. Mirakel's tunes. It pleads in Hoffmann's confessions of love, in the exhortations of the dead mother, and in Antonia's swan song. There is something in the conjuring power of this music, in the depths of feeling it stirs, in the death fear and death desire it pours into unforgettable melodies, which does not allow you to escape from this haunting sense of a concealed significance. Whether or not the librettist meant to express a symbolic meaning, there can be no doubt that the composer did. There is more in the events on the stage and in this music than what meets the eye and the ear.

4

Impossible, that the interpretation of the three feminine figures has reached the deepest level yet. They must be more than mere types of women, even if they are also that. There is something more meaningful in the three acts than the choice of three girls and three disappointments in love. The rational concept of the meaning of the three women all of a sudden strikes me as superficial, flat, and banal. It is very possible, even probable, that such a commonplace was in the mind of the writer, but unconsciously he said more than he consciously knew, expressed a meaning beyond his grasp. It should not be forgotten that the French librettist took the material of the text from *The Tales of Hoffmann* from various novels by the German writer, Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776–1822), whom he then made the leading figure of the opera. In these stories, Hoffmann showed a strange mixture of the realistic and the phantastic, of the grotesque and the tragic, creating a ghastly, haunting atmosphere even there where he depicts only everyday events. Offenbach's melodies communicate to you the deeper insight; they speak immediately to your emotions, alerted as they are by the hidden element of the dramatic action, although the plot itself presents only the surface aspect of something elusive and mystifying.

In a situation like this, psychoanalytic interpretation comes into its own, furnishing a key, as it does to a locked room, allowing us to penetrate below the surface of conscious thinking. There is not much of a mystery about Giulietta: she remains the "courtesan with brazen mien" as she is called in the play. What might give us food for thought is rather her place in the sequence of the female figures. She stands in the middle, following after Olympia, the doll, and preceding Antonia over whom looms the shadow of death. Since Giulietta represents the woman who arouses and appeals to man's sensual desires, promising their fulfillment, her middle position in the sequence suggests the interpretation that in her is represented the figure which governs the mature years of a man's life.

More intriguing is the personality of Olympia. How does this

doll, the child-woman appear in the light of psychoanalytic interpretation? What can be the significance of her appearance in Hoffmann's life, with this mixture of features, both grotesque and pathetic? Freud has taught us that the hidden meaning of many dreams, neurotic symptoms and other products of unconscious activity remains obscure as long as their manifest content alone is taken into consideration. In certain instances the concealed meaning of a dream, for example, can only be understood by reversing important parts of the dream plot. Then, and only then, and in no other way, may the meaning be unraveled from the distortions in such cases. Olympia is a doll who speaks and moves and sings only if and when appropriate buttons are pushed, when she is being led and manipulated. If we are to reverse the story, we get the picture of Hoffmann being led by hidden strings like a marionette. Or, if we go one step further, he is made to walk and talk and sing and act like an infant. The reversal of this part of the plot seems thus to place the story of Hoffmann's first love in his infancy. The poet appears in the reversal as a little boy, and Olympia as representing his mother who plays with him. He cannot act independently of her, and follows her about. If we are willing to trust this psychoanalytic interpretation which, after all, does not sound any more phantastic than the story of Hoffmann's first love in the operatic plot, some meaning in the succession of the two figures dawns on us: Olympia and Giulietta. If Olympia represents the mother, the first love object of the small boy, then Giulietta is the woman loved and desired by the grown man, the object of his passionate wishes, the mistress who gratifies his sensual desires.

But what is hidden then behind the last figure? Who is concealed behind Antonia? When we trust to psychoanalytic interpretation, this riddle will not be hard to solve. Antonia vacillates between her love for Hoffmann and her love for music. She disobeys the warnings not to sing and dies. When we reverse the contents again, as we did before, we arrive at the following meaning: Hoffmann, the poet, vacillates between his love and his art, and he dies. In the sequence of the plot, Antonia is the last image of woman as she appears to the old man. Antonia is the figure of death. The three female figures appear to us now in a new light: Olympia as

the representative of the mother, object of the love of the helpless and dependent little boy; Giulietta as the desired mistress of the grown man, Antonia as the personification of death which the old man is approaching.

It is at this point in our attempts at unraveling the hidden pattern of meaning behind Offenbach's opera, that the mental image of the composer himself emerges, shaded by the knowledge of his life story. Can it be incidental that he, already fatally ill, worked feverishly at this, his last opus which he hoped was going to be his best accomplishment? They called him then in Paris "Mozart of the Champs Elysées." Mozart, his beloved and revered master, knew when he composed his *Requiem* that he would die soon. Offenbach too realized that his end was approaching. He put his full creative power into his work, and he died after it was completed like Antonia during her swan song. In the demoniac tunes of Dr. Mirakel are all the shudders of the approaching annihilation. All passionate longing for life and light is poured into the third act. Offenbach wrote to M. Carvallio, Director of the Paris Opera: "Hurry to produce my play. Not much time is left to me and I have only the one wish to see the opening performance." He knew he had to complete his work even if his efforts would accelerate his death. It did. He died a few months before the opening night. Like Antonia he perished in his song.

It is not accidental that E. T. A. Hoffmann, the hero of the opera, was himself a musician as well as a poet. The identification of Offenbach with the figure of Antonia is also indicated in her passionate desire to become an artist like her mother whose spirit exhorts her to sacrifice all to her singing. Offenbach's father was a singer in the synagogue and a composer of Jewish religious music.

The psychoanalytic interpretation here presented may seem forced to the reader unfamiliar with the methods of eliciting unconscious meanings. It will be helpful to point out that the symbolic significance here discovered is only a restatement in new form of an old motif well known from numerous ancient myths and tales. It can be called the motif of the man and the three women one of whom he has to choose. Freud gave the first psychoanalytical interpretation of this recurrent plot in one of his less known papers.¹ He

deciphered the concealed meaning in the material of *Lear*, which Shakespeare had taken from older sources. The old king stands between his three daughters of whom the youngest, Cordelia, is the most deserving. Goneril and Regan vie with each other in protestations of their affection for the father, but Cordelia "loves and is silent." In the last scene of the drama, Lear carries Cordelia, who is dead, across the stage. Freud elucidated the hidden significance of this scene by the process of reversal. It means, of course, the figure of death who carries away the body of Old Lear, as the Valkyries carry off the slain hero. Traces of this original meaning can be seen already in the scene of Cordelia bending over her "childchanged father." As is frequently the case of dreams about persons dear to the dreamer, Cordelia's silence in itself signifies unconsciously that she is dead, that she is death itself in a mythical form.

The same motif, displaced, distorted and elaborated, appears in another one of Shakespeare's plays. The Portia scenes in the *Merchant of Venice* reveal to the interpretation of Freud an unexpected aspect. Portia will yield her hand to the man who, among three caskets, chooses the one which contains her picture. Here we encounter a hidden symbolism which we already know from Greek antiquity: boxes, chests and other receptacles are symbolic substitutes for the female body. In the Bassanio scene of the play, the motif of the man who has to choose between three women is thus expressed in symbolic form. Bassanio prefers the casket which is leaden to the gold and silver ones:

. . . but thou, thou meager lead,
Which rather threatenest, than dost promise aught.
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence.

The features of paleness, like silence in the case of Cordelia, appear frequently in dreams to signify that a figure is dead: persons who are deathly pale or who are voiceless represent dead persons or death itself. Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann* is a singer, it is true, but to sing is forbidden to her and it is her song which brings about her death, silences her forever. In unconscious productions, opposites may stand for each other, can replace each other. The

secret similarities between the two Shakespearian plays become transparent: an old motif appears in the one in a tragic, in the other in a light version. What is in reality inevitable and preordained, namely that in the end man has to yield to death, is here turned into a free choice. That which threatens is changed into wish-fulfillment—a result itself of wishful thinking. There are hints which point to the original meaning, to the kind of a choice involved. (“Who chooses me must give and hazard all he hath” says the leaden casket “which rather threatenest than dost promise aught” to Bassanio.)

Let me follow the old motif into the realm of the fairy tale where we meet with it frequently in its diverse forms, for instance, in the story of Cinderella who is the youngest of the sisters, and conceals herself. We can trace it farther back to the Erynyes, Parcae and Moiras, the goddesses of fate who are standing guard over individual destiny. The third figure among them is Atropos, who cut the thread of life. Corresponding to the Parcae are the Norse in Germanic mythology who, too, are conceived as watching over human fate. They rule over gods and men alike, and from what is decreed by them neither god nor man can escape. Man's fate is determined by them at the hour of the child's birth, by what they say to the newborn infant. The word fate (*fatum*) itself, is derived from the same root as “word” or “that which is spoken.” That what they say in magic words is a man's fate. Derived from the same Indo-German root, the word “fee” in modern German, the word “feie” in old French, and the Irish adjective “fay,” which is contained in fairy, all originally denoted goddesses of fate. In many fairy tales the fairies are represented as bringing gifts to a newborn infant. In most instances they appear as beneficent, as kind, lovely, well-wishing figures. But in some of the stories their original fatal character re-emerges behind the benign aspect.

In conformity with the psychological law of the opposite which can replace one aspect by its protagonist in our unconscious thinking, the goddess of death sometimes appears under the aspect of the great goddess of Love. In most ancient mythologies the same female figure has both functions like Kali in India, Ashtar with the Semitic tribes, and Aphrodite with the Greeks. Yes, indeed,

it is wishful thinking which succeeded at last in transforming the most terrifying apparition into the desirable, the female figure of death into that of the beloved.

We look back at Offenbach's opera: Olympia, Giulietta, Antonia. Here are three women in one, or one woman in three shapes: the one who gives birth, the one who gives sexual gratification, the one who brings death. Here are the three aspects woman has in a man's life: the mother, the mistress, the annihilator. The first and the last characters meet each other in the middle figure. In mythological and literary reactions the representatives of love and of destruction can replace each other as in Shakespeare's plays, or they succeed each other as in Hoffmann's tales of thwarted love. In his three loves a reaction formation unfolds itself: the woman chosen appears in each beginning as the loveliest, most desirable object, and always, in the end, represents doom and death. It is as if her true character reveals itself only in the final scene. For as long as the reaction formation is in power, the most terrible appears as the most desirable.

Behind all these figures is originally a single one, just as in the triads of goddesses whom modern comparative history of religion has succeeded in tracing back to their prototype of one goddess. For all of us the mother is the woman of destiny. She is the *femme fatale* in its most literal sense, because she brought us into the world, she taught us to love, and it is she upon whom we call in our last hour. The mother as a death-dealing figure became alien to our conscious thinking. But she may become comprehensible in this function when death appears as the only release from suffering, as the one aim desired, the final peace. It is in this sense the dying soldiers call for their mothers. I can never forget a little boy who, in the agonies of a painful illness, cried: "Mother, you have brought me into the world, why can't you make me dead now?"

It is noteworthy that the motif of one man between three women appears in an earlier opera of Offenbach, who took an active part in the choice and shape of the libretto. The *Belle Hélène* uses a plot from Greek mythology: Paris, son of Priamos, has to choose between Athene, Hera and Aphrodite. The charming aria of the

mythological playboy says: "On Mount Ida three goddesses quarreled in the wood. 'Which,' said the princesses, 'of us three is the fairest?'" Here, again, we have the motif of choosing, this time in a frivolous version. To the young ladies' man, Hera promises power and fame, Athene wisdom, but

... the third, ah, the third
The third remained silent.
She gained the price all the same.

Is it not strange that Aphrodite, the goddess of love, remains silent? She does not speak, yet she is eloquent. In the end the young prince chooses her, only it is not choice, it is necessity. She is not only the goddess of Love, but also of Death. *The Tales of Hoffmann* tell and sing the role of women in a man's life; that is to say: in every man's life.

5

I now remember when the melody that haunted me for several days first emerged. It was a week ago on my way back from the Public Library. I had looked up something there. Before leaving I had seen on a desk a book which was a biography of Jacques Offenbach. I took it, looked at the composer's picture and ran over the pages reading a paragraph here and there: the story of his childhood in Germany, his struggle and triumph at Paris, his way of composing, the feverish working on the score of *The Tales of Hoffmann*. He had a presentiment he would not live to see the opening night of the opera. He felt the end was near. He died a few months after he had reached sixty-one.

Walking home through the streets that evening, I thought of the book I am working on and a sudden anxiety overcame me that I would die before finishing it. It occurred to me that I had passed sixty-one a few months ago. And then the aria from *The Tales of Hoffmann* emerged and the unrecognized melody began to haunt me as if it wanted to remind me of something one would like to forget.

¹ *Das Motiv der Kaestchenwahl, Gesammelte Schriften, Vol. X.*

FRITZ WITTELS

Heinrich von Kleist—

Prussian Junker and Creative Genius

A Study in Bisexuality

IN STUDYING THE LIFE and work of Heinrich von Kleist we will not only come to an insight into this great and unlucky man as an individual but, maybe, also to a psychological understanding of Prussian education and its results in the period after Frederick the Great, whose tradition survived for almost two centuries.

Heinrich von Kleist was born and raised on the arid soil of Brandenburg, Prussia's motherland. Kleist was one of the greatest poets and playwrights in the German language. Outside of Germany he is little known, translations cannot re-create the particular flavor of his work. In his own country he was more and more appreciated after his death (1811), reaching the peak during the nationalistic period in Germany after 1870. No other creative genius was deeper rooted in the soil of Prussia, no one better qualified to convey the spirit of his country with its discipline, sense of duty, extremism in obedience, and rebellion.

All his lifetime he was staggering from one failure to the other. He did not see even a single one of his plays performed on the stage. He never could free himself from the doom of self-destruction. He was a clear case of agitated depression, definitely presenting a psychosis in periods of exacerbation. He died, thirty-four years old, a suicide. (His literary critics feel that Heinrich von Kleist would have become Germany's greatest playwright could he have ended a normal span of life. It is, however, futile to make such statements, for the same explosive forces that made him great also destroyed him before his time.)

Von Kleist was a "Junker," but his relatives felt that he disgraced them. A von Kleist should definitely not have been a playwright but an officer sitting on horseback, and commanding soldiers, rigorously. The name of the von Kleist family can be traced back to medieval times (1175, according to Karl Federn). They gave officers and generals to the Electors of Brandenburg and later to the rulers of Prussia, up to the end of World War II. A general and others of the clan of lower rank were fighting for the Nazis. The famous Field Marshal General Heinrich Ferdinand Emil Kleist, Count of Nollendorf (1762-1823), helped in the liberation of Germany from Napoleonic subjugation.

Some members of the family became prominent in science in the eighteenth century. One of the Kleists discovered the Leyden Jar, the device for storing static electricity. Occupation with science, though inferior to military service, was not considered disgraceful. After all, was not war a science? Any scientific research might come in handy in war! It was different with poetry, which was definitely held in contempt. Even before Heinrich, another von Kleist indulged in poetry. His name was Ewald Christian (1715-1759), but he at least remained a military officer while Heinrich resigned from the army after a few years of service. Ewald Christian was killed a hero in the battle of Kunersdorf on August 12, 1759. Leading his battalion, he attacked a Russian battery. When his right arm was hit, he changed the sword to his left hand and went on until three cannon shells smashed his right leg. He lay unconscious on the battlefield all night, was sacked by the Cossacks and only on the following day was he transported to Frankfort on

the Oder. There he died and was buried with military honors by the Russian garrison. In the eyes of the family, Ewald Christian was an eccentric who, because of his writing poetry, skipped several times in military advancement.

Heinrich von Kleist was born in 1777 in Frankfort on the Oder, a joyless small town in Brandenburg, not to be mistaken for Goethe's native town, Frankfort on the Main, the large city with Western interests. Frankfort on the Oder was always a center of the von Kleists. Heinrich's father, a retired major, died when the boy was twelve years old. Heinrich, being the eldest son, had to become a soldier, as a matter of course. He had to join the Potsdam regiment of the Guards before he was quite fifteen. There he got his training, but no further schooling. In his earlier years he had been tutored privately and described as an obedient average student. At sixteen, he participated in the Rhine Campaign of 1793. His letters of that time, written in poor, ungrammatical language, reveal him as a serious boy, full of respect for his superiors, and well-behaved. In the same year—and five years after his father's death—his mother died. He mourned her in unfree, hackneyed phrases.¹ Nothing yet indicated the inspired genius of later. In 1795, the regiment came home from a rather inglorious campaign, in 1797 he received his commission and two years later Kleist resigned. We know little of the deeper motivation for this step, a step so unusual to be done by a von Kleist. From his dry, schoolmasterly, pedantic letters to his fiancée, Wilhelmine von Zenge, we may be sure of one fact: Kleist had not found himself yet. At the time of his resignation, and long afterwards, he remained a typical representative of the "Junker" spirit—a dry duty-and-service-machine plus the explosive feeling that he could not continue in service.

Why did he resign? We have a letter written to an older friend in which Kleist tried to explain his decision. The letter is of enormous length and boring as are all of his utterances of those days. In the army—he wrote to his friend—one cannot be both an officer and a human being. That was why he had to quit. As good as this sounds we cannot but consider his motivation a rationalization of deeper instinctive forces. At the time of his resignation, Kleist lived

in Berlin and Potsdam and his service, except for a six weeks' period of maneuvers, was far from strenuous. He was given to studies and to music and he had excellent friends among the officers of the garrison. We mention here two of them, since they will appear further in this short biography: Ernst von Pfuël, who much later, 1848, became Prussian secretary of war, and Otto von Ruehle, later chief of the general staff.

In order to perceive Kleist's deeper motives, we have to look at the psychology of the Prussian army as organized by the "Great Elector" in the seventeenth century, filled with compulsive spirit by King Frederick William I, proven a formidable instrument of war by Frederick the Great, and declining after the latter's death (1786). It was in that phase of rapid decline that Heinrich von Kleist entered this "organization of men," spending eight of his formative years in it before he quit.

Elsewhere I tried to show the part that obsession, paranoia, and latent homosexuality played in the origin of the Prussian army with its brittle discipline, its sense of duty and specific honor.²

I discussed military, religious, and students' organizations, their bloom and their decay, and also smaller groups of men which not only became hotbeds of overt homosexuality but in addition served a double purpose in cases of latent homosexuality. Double, because the organization prevented the outbreak of the perversion by sublimating the dangerous, undesirable, instinct and, on the other hand, turned libido away from woman to its own overheated and therefore sexualized aims. In this way, the community fostered subliminal homosexuality which broke through whenever the original aims weakened.

Quoting myself: "As long as the covenant remains strong in its aims and practices it succeeds in its sublimation. If it is weakened as a result of a clash with inimical social forces, the homosexual drive breaks through—all the more strongly since the specific energy of the drive was continuously fed to grow in the group. In such phases of transition, in the midst of the danger of a breakthrough, the practice of the covenant is usually intensified, which makes it appear more and more morbid until in the end overt homosexuality comes to the fore just the same. History is full of

examples of this kind, particularly medieval history. Religious orders of monks and knights before, during, and after the Crusades show these psychological mechanisms, frequently extended over centuries."

Not only history offers examples of men's societies with their double aim, everyday life also is full of such clubs, enthusiastic flag bearers, smaller and larger groups of men which, as a rule, serve well to keep the balance between the components of bisexuality. We may express this in biblical words: Render unto woman the things which are woman's and unto man the things that are man's.

The following will prove that Kleist all through his short life had to run away from his homosexual tendencies; most of the time latent, but occasionally breaking through as overt perversion, he was haunted by them as by *Eumenides*. And we reach the conclusion that Kleist resigned from the army because its touch of latent and overt homosexuality was too much for him. We know that Kleist suffered from a slight anomaly of his penis, most likely a *phimosis*, the somatic contribution to his compulsive masturbation. He complained about it in a letter to his friend L. von Brocke, ten years his senior. That letter does not exist, but we have von Brocke's reply, containing words of consolation.³ Much was written about Kleist's trip to Wuerzburg, because he himself wrapped it in mystery, which is natural enough, and on the other hand he referred to it in romantic exaggerations quite out of proportion. This gave rise to all kinds of guesswork.

Between Kleist's resignation from the army and that trip to Wuerzburg lay one and a half years of studies at the second-rate university of his home town. He spent there three semesters studying mathematics, philosophy and physics, according to the second tradition of his family. Although he was sitting up with his textbooks every night, he got nowhere and quit his studies, too. In those days he met Wilhelmine von Zenge. (Mind you, there was hardly anybody in his company without a "von.") Wilhelmine was the daughter of a Prussian colonel. Kleist was soon more or less officially engaged to her. A great number of Kleist's letters to her were later destroyed by Wilhelmine and her family. All of the

surviving correspondence is strangely dry and boring. The fiery poet of later years assumes the part of a petty bourgeois school-master in his letters to Wilhelmine.

In 1780, Kleist left Frankfort on the Oder with its provincial university. He moved to Berlin, hoping to get a position in civil service. He was probably pressed by his fiancée's family, who would not permit a marriage to a man without a regular income. We know that Kleist's trip to Berlin had another, and secret, aim: the surgical operation, which was soon performed in Wuerzburg. He spoke vaguely of it in a letter to his sister Ulrike. He hoped, as he put it in that letter, to save by his journey "happiness, honor and, maybe, the life of a man."

After the death of his mother, Ulrike von Kleist, three years his senior, was perhaps the only feminine creature whom Heinrich really loved—his mother substitute. Ulrike was a masculine woman who always had to help when her brother fell into a desperate plight, which happened often enough. In his letter he queried: "Why are you not a man?—My God, how deeply I have always wished for that. . . . If you were a man—because a woman can never be my confidant—I would not have to look for a friend so far away! Do not try to find out the aim of my journey, even if you could, do not do it. Think that I can reach my aim only by concealing it from all men. At least for the time being, because some day it will be my pride and my joy to tell it. . . ."

One week after his arrival in Wuerzburg he wrote to his fiancée that he had been promised certain relief. Of what disease? That he could not say yet. One month later he told Wilhelmine that he was cured now and in a position to get happily married to her. It was a jubilant letter, written on his twenty-third birthday, and it ended with the words: "Let your next goal be to be trained for a mother. My goal is to become a good citizen. Our further goal—which both of us will try to reach and which we can make sure of—is the fulfillment of love. Good night, Wilhelmine, my fiancée, soon my bride, soon mother of my children."

He returned to Berlin, but his jubilant spirit did not prevail. He got the coveted job, but he could not keep it. A few months later he ran away from civil service just as he had from the army.

This time he traveled to Paris with his sister. Ulrike disguised herself as a man and in this disguise she lived in Paris for months. Her brother, in contrast, looked amazingly girlish. We have a miniature of Kleist by Krueger which displays these feminine features.

Kleist's always flattering biographers state that this good and true Prussian from the Mark Brandenburg could, as a matter of course, not like the "Babylon on the Seine." We have to add here: the heterosexual Babylon. From Paris, Kleist moved to Switzerland where he decided to become a farmer. He wrote to his fiancée, who patiently waited for him in Frankfort, to join him in Switzerland as a farmer's wife. When she declined, he abruptly ended that joyless relation (1802). Telling her of his new burning ambition to become a famous writer, he closed his letter with the words: "Dear girl, do not write me any more. I have no other wish than to die soon. H.K."

We realize the contradiction here: burning ambition in the bud and death wish. Yet both desires existed in this tortured soul simultaneously. To be sure, marriage was impossible to him.

Kleist's life was a regular museum of defense mechanisms against homosexuality. All of his reaction formations were destined either to break down or did not succeed sufficiently to redeem him for any length of time. His resignation from the army shows the *run-away complex*, which psychoanalysts frequently observe in their patients.⁴

Kleist ran away not only from the army, but also from his scientific studies, from civil service, from his fiancée, from Germany, from Paris, from Switzerland, from anyone and everywhere. With this trend was coupled an obsessional desire to withdraw, to be left alone: a *hermit complex*. The hermit is the logical sequence of the quitter. Withdrawal from the social danger of overt homosexuality is followed by the flight into solitude. We know many examples of this form of narcissism in psychiatric practice as well as in universal history. This defense mechanism cannot last, because the same forces that drive a man into solitude drive him out of it after a relatively short time. Temptation follows the hermit into the desert.

Kleist met a number of literary men in Switzerland, who accepted him as their equal. Then and there, his burning ambition to be a great writer was born. Later he was to be not only their equal, but to develop outstanding genius. This gift of the gods could have saved him had he been able to keep his sublimation alive. He could not—for reasons we shall discuss later.

We wish to repeat here what Freud often emphasized in his writings (on Leonardo da Vinci, Dostoevsky, etc.): Psychoanalysis is not in a position to solve the mystery of artistic creativeness. We can tell why a certain author must choose his particular material and work it out his particular way. Dostoevsky had to describe parricide and glorify a certain type of woman. In the case of Leonardo it was the "Leonardesque" smile and bisexual motifs. In the case of the Prussian militarist, Heinrich von Kleist, it was *Schrecklichkeit* and supermasculinity. Psychoanalysis cannot tell, however, what makes an author great and creative. In our treatises on creators we do not even try to tackle this problem.

As a rule, writers show their talent early. We do not know why it unfolded so late in Kleist's life, and we refrain from guessing. Sudden eruption of artistic qualities in people who did not betray them before, although it is the exception, could be observed in some of our great authors, e.g. in Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). In the case of Kleist, recognition by a group of congenial men became the catalytic agent.

We have a number of Kleist's letters to and about friends in which he displayed enthusiasm and warmth that impress the reader nowadays as homosexual. However, we are told that the style of letter writing in his era was different from ours and that we have no right to suspect phrases like the following as being of homosexual nature:

(January 1801) "Sometimes, at night, when I fell asleep at his breast, he held me without falling asleep himself." Or, in a letter to Henry Lohse: (December 1801) "And you think that I do not love you? Oh, how will you ever be able to convince any man that I do not love you? . . . And yet you could desert me? So soon? So easily? . . . It is so hard for me to say the last word—we were so good, oh so good, to each other in Paris—are you

not too unspeakably sad? I say, do you not wish to put your arms around me once more? Do not think at all, ask your first impulse and obey it—and should it be really the last word—my God, then I say good-bye to you and to all joys! Good-bye, good-bye. Heinrich Kleist.”

All this is supposed to be just eighteenth century emotional style. What a difference, however, between this outburst and the hackneyed decrees which the same man sent to his fiancée at about the same time.

At least one letter, discovered only some time ago, with all allowances deducted, cannot be considered other than a homosexual love letter. It is addressed to Ernst von Pfuel (January 1805): . . . “How did we fall into each other’s arms a year ago in Dresden? . . . The fault is all mine. I have involved you, oh I cannot explain it to you the way I feel it. . . . We will never again embrace each other that way. . . . You restored the age of the Greek in my heart, I could have slept with you, my dear boy; my soul embraced you! Often have I watched your lovely body with truly *girlish* feelings when you took a swim before my eyes in the lake at Thun. It could really serve as a model to an artist. . . . Your small, curly-haired head over a massive neck, two broad shoulders, an athletic body, in its totality a flawless picture of strength as though you were formed in the image of the most beautiful young bull who ever had to bleed for Zeus. Lycurgus’ entire legislation and his concept of the youth’s love has become clear to me by the emotions you woke in me. Come to me! Go with me to Anspach and let us enjoy our sweet friendship. . . . I will never marry, be you my wife, my children and grandchildren! . . . I would like to say more to you, but it is not fit for a letter. . . . Heinrich von Kleist, Berlin, January 7, 1805.”

This letter calls to mind Oscar Wilde’s letters to his boy friend. The same exalted and “knowing” style. It is not necessarily the letter of a man indulging in the sexual practice of homosexuality, but undoubtedly of a homosexual who fought his own feminine component most of his life. Kleist lived in a continuously repeated homosexual panic.

In contradistinction to his femininity, Kleist grew into virility

by way of his writings. His features betray him as feminine, his writings shout: "I am a man, a heartless man." The drama with its sharp ascent to its climax and relentless descent to its end is the most masculine art anyhow. As mentioned above, Kleist would have become the greatest German playwright without doubt, had it been given him to survive. In his writing, he is ruthless and harsh; his characters are blocks of granite, and this not only in his stage plays but also in his short stories, which in terms of atrocities approach Nazi cruelty—except that Kleist did not commit them, he only recorded them. It was once said that Shakespeare would have become a horrible criminal had he not been given the ability to objectivate his cruel instincts in the form of gruesome characters in his plays. The same is true of Kleist, who belonged to a nation which has shown the world more than once that it can do both: on the one hand kill and torture, on the other sublimate cruel tendencies into creations of art, sometimes of the highest order (German music!).

In Kleist's stories, people are buried alive, burned, quartered and broken on the wheel. Children's skulls are smashed against the skulls of their own mothers, the inhabitants of large islands are wiped out, earthquakes swallow towns completely. This unhappy man found a way of his own to free himself of humane feelings which he considered a weakness—his feminine component. As a playwright as well as a narrator he possesses enormous force, he carries you along with the violence of his actions and words in a pace that takes your breath away. One cannot help feeling that something is wrong with this master of horrors; he is driven by an infernal power, by unspeakable, morbid suffering, something close to insanity, often trespassing the borderline.

Kleist's tragedy, *Penthesilea*, although more than long enough for one theater evening, rushes from start to finish without any subdivision into acts. It is a masterpiece of composition and characterization, and replete with beautiful verses—yet it is the work of an insane genius.

Penthesilea is the Queen of the Amazons, who derive their name from their custom of mutilating their bosoms in order to be better able to set a bow against their chests. At their festival

of the roses, they give themselves lovingly to men—but only after having first defeated these men in bloody battle and then forced into bed as their prisoners. Kleist's Amazons are supposed to be quite feminine, notwithstanding the absence of a bosom and the custom of accepting defeated men only. Penthesilea even says she would prefer to be dirt to being an unattractive woman. She sees the Greek hero, Achilles, and falls in love with him. According to the law of her country, she has to "embrace him with iron" first. This is not impossible, in spite of Achilles' striking superiority, because she can take him on with bloodhounds and elephants. Achilles, however, is not defeated, at least not by her first assault. He, too, falls in love, and in order to spare her feelings he makes her believe that he has been vanquished by her. In the eyes of her pagan mother superior, Penthesilea is a renegade anyway, because she has singled out and fallen in love with Achilles instead of accepting anybody whom she has first prostrated in battle. To an Amazon, one man is no different from another.

Achilles, on learning from Penthesilea that all Amazons have their right breast amputated, exclaims:

Could the terrific rumor yet be true?
And all these blooming figures
Surrounding thee, the flowers of their sex,
Perfect, each one of them, as if an altar
To kneel in love before it and in worship,
They all are robbed, inhuman, sinful?

PENTHESILEA: Did you not know that?

ACHILLES (*pressing his face against her breast*): Oh Queen!
The seat of all young and lovely feeling
Because of a mania, barbarian—

PENTHESILEA: Be reassured,
They all take refuge in this left one,
Where they dwell closer to the heart.
I hope you will not miss the other.—

It is very difficult to remain serious about this love scene, all too close to a parody on the "mamma complex" (Edmund Bergler and Ludwig Eidelberg).

Achilles' delicate ruse is betrayed and Penthesilea learns that she has not defeated him but, on the contrary, he had defeated

her. No sooner has she discovered his romantic deception than she changes into a monster. The man loves her and waits for her unarmed, not expecting hostilities, but she attacks him and hunts him to death with her dogs and arrows. With sadistic voluptuousness—a super-Salome—she assaults her murdered lover with her teeth and, with her dogs' help, tears the corpse to pieces. His blood drips from the corners of her mouth.

It was often said that Penthesilea, who desires to surrender to man and then despises surrender, who loves man and then hates him, was—Kleist himself. Penthesilea expresses his "girlish" instincts and his masculine protest against them. Undoubtedly, his masculine sister Ulrike played a more or less unconscious part in the conception.

Kleist sent his tragedy to Goethe (1808), who was then about sixty and enthroned in Weimar as the recognized prince of Germany's poets. He had grown old in reverence of proportion, ancient Greek ideals, and rejected the play and its author with a kind of horror. He said he was sorry that an otherwise remarkable talent could go astray so far.

Shortly after *Penthesilea*, Kleist wrote his fairy-tale play *Kaethchen of Heilbronn*, Penthesilea's antipode. He said himself that the two plays belong together like plus and minus. Penthesilea is bloody protest against the man she loves, Kaethchen is all devotion and subservience. Finally, she gets her man just the same, having chosen the better way to his subjugation. The fifteen-year-old Kaethchen who, as we eventually hear, is the illegitimate daughter of the emperor, follows her knight Friedrich Wetter Graf von Strahl (this is: Frederick Thunderstorm Count of the Flash) like a dog in spite of all the terror he has in store for her. She sleeps on straw in his stables. He does not want to have anything to do with her, but he cannot get rid of her, neither with dogs nor with the whip. She is all humility, but in her somnambulant state she knows that he will marry her within a year's span.

In spite of these extremes, we do not get the impression of perversion here. Kleist approaches the peak of his art, his salvation—it is time, because he is only a few years from his death. Kaethchen is filled with the spirit of Grimm's fairy tales in the

best sense: natural fragrantcy, humbleness, hope, and happy ending. The play is a medieval saga. Cherubs protect the girl, innocence is finally exalted, intriguing ugliness and falsehood are unmasked. We feel Kleist's love for Germany, no atrocities in this play, if we forget the count's threats with dog and whip. The count is rather a good fellow who does not seem to relish the girl's constant answers: "Yes, my sublime lord."—"No, my worshipped master!" and "Gracious Sir!"

We do not know whether Goethe saw this play before Kleist's death. Most likely it would not have changed his judgment. Kaethchen is pining away, a case of hysteria without any personality aside from her masochistic eroticism. Even Goethe's Gretchen was much stronger a person, who succumbed to Faust, but first he had to conquer the resisting maiden. At the conclusion of Kleist's play, our masochistic Kaethchen eats up her man, figuratively and, unlike sadistic Penthesilea, no blood is shed and nobody dies.

The Count von Strahl is visibly afraid of her, following him like his shadow. Once she jumps out of an upper window and breaks both her legs while he is happening to pass by. Another time he shouts: "Kick her out, I do not want to have anything to do with her!" It is all in vain, she is his inescapable fate.

Kaethchen remains consistent to the very end. Shortly before the wedding, the count apologizes for all the injuries he inflicted upon her and he weeps.

Replies Kaethchen "*(with anxiety)*":

Heavens! What is the matter? What moves you so?
What have you inflicted upon me?

I know nothing of it. . . .

Kleist knew it: You cannot get rid of women. Not of actual women without, not of one's own femininity within. He was afraid of both of them and described them as two extremes (Penthesilea and Kaethchen) who hardly exist in reality. Kaethchen, in all her sweetness and poetic glorification, cannot be a man's comrade like a normal woman.

Not more than eight years were granted to Kleist, the writer, between his first literary attempts and his death. In this short span

of time he created his classics, plays and stories, all of them born under terrific pain—his sublimation.

Under sublimation we understand (1) desexualization of an undesired instinct, plus (2) continuous drain of the instinct by action acceptable to the ego of the sublimating individual, and (3) success with the contemporary group in and for which the individual lives.

Kleist met with very little recognition, neither in terms of royalties nor of praise. Few creative spirits are strong enough to benefit from their production even without recognition. They rid themselves of their vexing sense of incompleteness by the completeness of their work. Kleist with his feminine sensitivity was not one of those, except very temporarily towards the end of his life, when he became able to see and feel the plight of his countrymen.

He suffered with Germany, at that time subjugated by Napoleon, and helped kindle the spirit of liberation. After the two plays described, he wrote two patriotic plays. One of them (*Die Hermannsschlacht*), an allegory on Napoleon's conquest of Germany and the coming fight for liberation, sings of the Roman general's, Quintilius Varus, defeat in the forest of Teutoburg, A.D. 9. Here, too, we happen upon Kleistian atrocities. Thusnelda, Hermann's wife, has the Roman Ventidius dismembered and disemboweled by a hungry she-bear, because he had cheated her in love. She learned that Ventidius intended to strip her of her golden hair in order to send it to his empress Livia in Rome. He even felt like breaking out her teeth for the repair of the empress' bad denture. With Kleist, things are never quite without a streak of insanity.

His last play, by far his best and one of the best ever written in the German tongue, is a patriotic drama, glorifying Prussian army discipline and the strictest fulfillment of the soldier's duty in the service of his sovereign. By that time, Kleist had in his active life returned to his origin and had applied successfully for rehabilitation as a commissioned officer in his king's army. He united two forms of sublimation: to be again the active officer and to glorify the Prussian officer on the stage.

The *Prince of Homburg*, his last play, was not shown in the author's lifetime either and later when it was performed it could

not have the applause of his Junker class. These machine-men had no sense for the lofty poetry of duty and heroism, the way Kleist saw it. Any individual enthusiasm was suspicious and against their principles. The prince of this play is sentenced to die by Friedrich, the Great Elector, his uncle, because of disobeying an order. The prince wins the battle by his disobedience, but the Elector, as a matter of principle, considers discipline more important than a battle won. Prussian military glory in quintessence. Like the older Junius Brutus, whose son had to die for a similar offense, Friedrich had his nephew arrested and court-martialed. The playwright, understanding that heroic valor can be coupled with heroic fear, shows us the prince facing death with fear, expressing it in frantic words. This was more than Prussian officers could take. The author was not one of them, although he was a von Kleist. A Junker, the perfect automaton of militarism, is never afraid to die, and if he is, he does not admit it. The prince's heroic march from fear to lofty acceptance of his fate in the name of Brandenburg's grandeur was not palatable to Brandenburg's machinery. Dostoevsky, and before him Stendhal—in his novel *The Red and the Black*—could display emotions of this kind, but Kleist was once more rejected by his caste just when he felt ready to rejoin them.

Soon after, Kleist was dead. He happened to meet Henriette Vogel, a very sick woman, the wife of an accountant. She was not young, not attractive, her face was disfigured by pockmarks. Her disease was supposed to be cancer, she had to expect painful ailment, she was longing for death but lacked the courage for lonesome suicide. Kleist, who has been longing for death all his life almost uninterruptedly, promised her on a day of exaltation that he would kill her and himself whenever she would ask for it. The reverse is also possible! Maybe, he made her promise him that she would depart with him whenever he asked her. Anyway, Kleist fell vehemently in love with Henriette. Here he saw the solution: one cannot live, but one can die with a woman! All secret guilt, all anxiety, all tension, vanished; he felt happy as never before in his life. All his friends unanimously bear witness that never was there a regular affair with Henriette. Yet, outbursts

like the following over a year before their joint death show the flames of passion:

To Adolfine Henriette Vogel

Berlin, after Michaelmas, 1810

My Jettchen, my heart, my darling, my little pigeon, my life, my dear, sweet life, light of my life, my everything, my goods and chattels, my castle, my soil, meadows and vineyards, oh sun of my life, sun, moon and stars, heaven and earth, my past, my future, my bride, my girl, my dear friend, my love, my heart's blood, my entrails, apple of my eye, oh you dearest, how am I to call you? My golden child, my pearl, my gem, my crown, my queen and empress. Sweet darling of my heart, highest, most cherished, my everything and anything, my wife, my wedding, christening of my children, my tragedy, my immortality. *Oh you are my better alter ego*, my virtues, my merits, my hope, remission of my sins, my future and salvation, daughter of heaven, God's own child, my pleader and defender, guardian angel, my cherub and seraph—I love you so! . . . [*My translation. F. W.*]

The letter of a maniac! Evidently, Kleist was in the midst of one of his numerous nervous calamities. This time he did not come out of it, but embraced the rapture of anticipated death. Kleist's soul, after the pressure of a life time is at long last freed of ever-burdening guilt and anxiety. He responds with the exuberance of the letter quoted above.

"November 20th, 1811, at two o'clock P.M., the couple arrived at an inn at Wann-Lake near Potsdam. The landlord reported that they walked around the lake, ate and drank, chattered and laughed together. Light was on in their room all night and the valet saw them walk to and fro all the time. The twenty-first noon they sent a messenger with letters to Berlin. When they could be reasonably sure that the letters had reached their destination, they ordered coffee, rum, a table and chairs to be brought to a hill, about thirty feet from the lake. When the waitress returned to the inn, she heard the shots. Henriette lay in a pit; Kleist had shot her through the left breast and, kneeling in front of her, shot himself in the brain through his mouth. . . ."

Much has been written about this double-death, murder and suicide.⁵ Some of the explanations speak of Kleist's economic

plight, actually just then hardly bothering him too much. Others exalted Henriette Vogel, with whom he died, to Dante's Beatrice, a *unio mystica*. What does such a union mean? We may confirm his friend Ernst von Pfuel's sad epitaph that Kleist loved death more than life. But why? Some people are so discontented with part of their person that they decide to free themselves of this part at all cost. They wish to kill the unwanted component. The idea is to continue living with the other part. However, when they shoot at themselves, they naturally perish, the two parts being inseparable from one another, psychically as well as bodily. Caught in a tragic mistake close to insanity they kill themselves.

Ernest Jones emphasizes the underlying wish to return to mother; mother means birth, and birth equals death. From dust we come, to dust we go. We add here another approach which explains suicide—solitary suicide as well as “dying together” in terms of bisexuality, understanding them as an intrusion of the primary function against the inexorable fact that one cannot kill one component and survive with the other. The primary function, immortal as a god, does ask: Why not? And the secondary function is silenced—its objections are overruled.

When Kleist met Henriette, he was able to project his feminine part into the sick woman and kill it in this shape. Naturally, he had to go with her. The body of the dead woman next to his own spoke out, saying to her macabre lover: Here lies the sex that made you suffer, and you lie with it.

Let us refer once more to Kleist's love letter to Henriette. In spite of his Titanic attempt to prove his love, he cannot reach the level of genuine “genitality.” All his exuberance cannot conceal the absence of normal heterosexual feelings. His fear of his own femininity killed him. His life was dominated by homosexual panic.

The term homosexual panic came up during the first world war, when paroxysmal fright was observed in soldiers and could be recognized as originating in latent homosexuality, stirred up by constantly living with men only. Ferenczi divided the concept of homosexuality into active and passive inversion. Panic arises from the passive form, the fear of being overwhelmed, raped, emascu-

lated. This was Kleist's case. The struggle against latent homosexuality of this kind, as we know only too well, may lead to diabolic (paranoiac) destruction.

With Heinrich von Kleist, the greatest son of the race of the von Kleists, the destruction took place in fiction. Other members of his family had been producing "frightfulness" in active life. Their "degenerate" offspring died, unmourned by them, his death hardly deplored even by his friends.

¹ His father he never even mentioned in all his life. We know nothing of his Oedipus conflict except what can be deduced from his later fiction and plays. (Hellmut Kaister ingeniously attempted Kleist's Oedipus analysis in his paper "Kleist's Prinz von Homburg," *Imago*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, 1940.)

² "Struggle of a Homosexual in Pre-Hitler Germany," *Journal of Criminal Psychopathology*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Jan. 1943), pp. 408-423; "Collective Defense Mechanisms Against Homosexuality," *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Volume XXXI, No. 1 (Jan. 1944); "Psychoanalysis and History—The Nibelungen and the Bible," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Vol. XV, No. 1 (Jan. 1946).

³ I. Sadger, in a monograph on Kleist (Wiesbaden, 1910), expressed the opinion that Kleist suffered from compulsive masturbation and consequent compunctions. Around 1910 even Sadger, who was one of the first psychoanalytic explorers of homosexuality, did not know yet of the explosive power of latent homosexuality as first described in 1913 in Freud's classic on the "Schreber Case."

⁴ A successful businessman had to retire, because his surroundings and particularly one of his partners became obnoxious to him. That partner had a huge frame, an excellent set of teeth which he bared broadly with every grin and laugh. In such moments, my patient was afraid of getting grabbed by the man, being lifted up and sat down on the desk like a little child. Yet the patient was that man's superior. Another shock the patient always received when the errand boy, a small blond fellow, entered his room with a message. It was easy to read from his dreams that he was living in homosexual panic, but by no means was it easy to make the man see his complex with equanimity.

⁵ Cf. a paper by Ernest Jones, "On Dying Together With Special Reference to Heinrich von Kleist's Suicide," in *Essays on Applied Psychoanalysis* (International Psychoanalytic Library, Vol. 5, 1911, and 1923).

Part Two

WILLIAM EMPSON

Alice in Wonderland:

The Child as Swain

IT MUST SEEM a curious thing that there has been so little serious criticism of the Alices, and that so many critics, with so militant and eager an air of good taste, have explained that they would not think of attempting it. Even Mr. De la Mare's book, which made many good points, is queerly evasive in tone. There seems to be a feeling that real criticism would involve psychoanalysis, and that the results would be so improper as to destroy the atmosphere of the books altogether. Dodgson was too conscious a writer to be caught out so easily. For instance it is an obvious bit of interpretation to say that the Queen of Hearts is a symbol of "uncontrolled animal passion" seen through the clear but blank eyes of sexlessness; obvious, and the sort of thing critics are now so sure would be in bad taste; Dodgson said it himself, to the actress who took the part when the thing was acted. The books are so frankly about growing up that there is no great discovery in translating them into Freudian terms; it seems only the proper exegesis of a classic even where it would be a shock

to the author. On the whole the results of the analysis, when put into drawing-room language, are his conscious opinions; and if there was no other satisfactory outlet for his feelings but the special one fixed in his books the same is true in a degree of any original artist. I shall use psychoanalysis where it seems relevant, and feel I had better begin by saying what use it is supposed to be. Its business here is not to discover a neurosis peculiar to Dodgson. The essential idea behind the books is a shift onto the child, which Dodgson did not invent, of the obscure tradition of pastoral. The formula is now "*child-become-judge*," and if Dodgson identifies himself with the child so does the writer of the primary sort of pastoral with his magnified version of the swain. (He took an excellent photograph, much admired by Tennyson, of Alice Liddell as a ragged beggar girl, which seems a sort of example of the connection.) I should say indeed that this version was more open to neurosis than the older ones; it is less hopeful and more a return into oneself. The analysis should show how this works in general. But there are other things to be said about such a version of pastoral; its use of the device prior to irony lets it make covert judgments about any matter the author was interested in.

There is a tantalizing one about Darwinism. The first Neanderthal skull was found in 1856. *The Origin of Species* (1859) came out six years before *Wonderland*, three before its conception, and was very much in the air, a pervading bad smell. It is hard to say how far Dodgson under cover of nonsense was using ideas of which his set disapproved; he wrote some hysterical passages against vivisection and has a curious remark to the effect that chemistry professors had better not have laboratories, but was open to new ideas and doubted the eternity of hell. The 1860 meeting of the British Association, at which Huxley started his career as publicist and gave that resounding snub to Bishop Wilberforce, was held at Oxford where Dodgson was already in residence. He had met Tennyson in '56, and we hear of Tennyson lecturing him later on the likeness of monkeys' and men's skulls.

The only passage that I feel sure involves evolution comes at the beginning of *Wonderland* (the most spontaneous and "sub-

conscious" part of the books) when Alice gets out of the bath of tears that has magically released her from the underground chamber; it is made clear (for instance about watering places) that the salt water is the sea from which life arose; as a bodily product it is also the amniotic fluid (there are other forces at work here); ontogeny then repeats phylogeny, and a whole Noah's Ark gets out of the sea with her. In Dodgson's own illustration as well as Tenniel's there is the disturbing head of a monkey and in the text there is an extinct bird. Our minds having thus been forced back onto the history of species there is a reading of history from the period when the Mouse "came over" with the Conqueror; questions of race turn into the questions of breeding in which Dodgson was more frankly interested, and there are obscure snubs for people who boast about their ancestors. We then have the Caucus Race (the word had associations for Dodgson with local politics; he says somewhere, "I never go to a Caucus without reluctance"), in which you begin running when you like and leave off when you like, and all win. The subtlety of this is that it supports Natural Selection (in the offensive way the nineteenth century did) to show the absurdity of democracy, and supports democracy (or at any rate liberty) to show the absurdity of Natural Selection. The race is not to the swift because idealism will not let it be to the swift, and because life, as we are told in the final poem, is at random and a dream. But there is no weakening of human values in this generosity; all the animals win, and Alice because she is Man has therefore to give them comfits, but though they demand this they do not fail to recognize that she is superior. They give her her own elegant thimble, the symbol of her labor, because she too has won, and because the highest among you shall be the servant of all. This is a solid piece of symbolism; the politically minded scientists preaching progress through "selection" and *laissez-faire* are confronted with the full anarchy of Christ. And the pretense of infantilism allows it a certain grim honesty; Alice is a little ridiculous and discomfited, under cover of charm, and would prefer a more aristocratic system.

In the *Looking-Glass* too there are ideas about progress at an early stage of the journey of growing up. Alice goes quickly

through the first square by railway, in a carriage full of animals in a state of excitement about the progress of business and machinery; the only man is Disraeli dressed in newspapers—the new man who gets on by self-advertisement, the newspaper-fed man who believes in progress, possibly even the rational dress of the future.

. . . to her great surprise, they all *thought* in chorus (I hope you understand what *thinking in chorus* means—for I must confess that *I* don't), "Better say nothing at all. Language is worth a thousand pounds a word."

"I shall dream of a thousand pounds tonight, I know I shall," thought Alice.

All this time the Guard was looking at her, first through a telescope, then through a microscope, and then through an opera-glass. At last he said, "You're travelling the wrong way," and shut up the window and went away.

This seems to be a prophecy; Huxley in the Romanes lecture of 1893, and less clearly beforehand, said that the human sense of right must judge and often be opposed to the progress imposed by Nature, but at this time he was still looking through the glasses.

But the gentleman dressed in white paper leaned forward and whispered in her ear, "Never mind what they all say, my dear, but take a return ticket every time the train stops."

In 1861 "many Tory members considered that the prime minister was a better representative of conservative opinions than the leader of the opposition" (*D.N.B.*). This seems to be the double outlook of Disraeli's conservatism, too subtle to inspire action. I think he turns up again as the unicorn when the Lion and the Unicorn are fighting for the Crown; they make a great dust and nuisance, treat the common-sense Alice as entirely mythical, and are very frightening to the poor king to whom the Crown really belongs.

"Indeed I shan't," Alice said rather impatiently. "I don't belong to this railway journey at all—I was in a wood just now—and I wish I could get back there!"

When she gets back to the wood it is different; it is Nature in the raw, with no names, and she is afraid of it. She still thinks

the animals are right to stay there; even when they know their names "they wouldn't answer at all, if they were wise." (They might do well to write nonsense books under an assumed name, and refuse to answer even to that.) All this is a very Kafka piece of symbolism, less at ease than the preceding one; *Wonderland* is a dream, but the *Looking-Glass* is self-consciousness. But both are topical; whether you call the result allegory or "pure nonsense" it depends on ideas about progress and industrialization, and there is room for exegesis on the matter.

The beginning of modern child sentiment may be placed at the obscure edition of *Mother Goose's Melodies* (John Newbury, 1760), with "maxims" very probably by Goldsmith. The important thing is not the rhymes (Boston boasts an edition of 1719. My impression is that they improved as time went on) but the appended maxims, which take a sophisticated pleasure in them. Most are sensible proverbs which the child had better know anyway; their charm (mainly for the adult) comes from the unexpected view of the story you must take if they are not to be irrelevant.

Amphion's Song of Eurydice.

I won't be my Father's Jack,
I won't be my Father's Jill,
I won't be the Fiddler's Wife,
And I will have music when I will.

T'other little Tune,
T'other little Tune,
Prithee Love play me
T'other little Tune.

MAXIM.—Those Arts are the most valuable which are of the greatest Use.

It seems to be the fiddler whose art has been useful in controlling her, but then again she may have discovered the art of wheedling the fiddler. The pomp of the maxim and the childishness of the rhyme make a mock pastoral compound. The pleasure in children here is obviously a derivative of the pleasure in Macheath; the children are "little rogues."

Bow wow wow
 Whose dog art Thou?
 Little Tom Tinker's Dog.
 Bow wow wow.

Tom Tinker's Dog is a very good Dog; and an honester Dog than his Master.

Honest ("free from hypocrisy" or the patronizing tone to a social inferior) and *dog* ("you young dog") have their *Beggar's Opera* feelings here; it is not even clear whether Tom is a young vagabond or a child.

This is a pleasant example because one can trace the question back. Pope engraved a couplet "on the collar of a dog which I gave to His Royal Highness"—a friendly act as from one gentleman to another resident in the neighborhood.

I am his Highness' dog at Kew.
 Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?

Presumably Frederick himself would be the first to read it. The joke carries a certain praise for the underdog; the point is not that men are slaves but that they find it suits them and remain good-humored. The dog is proud of being the prince's dog and expects no one to take offense at the question. There is also a hearty independence in its lack of respect for the inquirer. Pope took this from Sir William Temple, where it is said by a fool: "I am the Lord Chamberlain's fool. And whose are you?" was his answer to the nobleman. It is a neat case of the slow shift of this sentiment from fool to rogue to child.

Alice, I think, is more of a "little rogue" than it is usual to say, or than Dodgson himself thought in later years:

loving as a dog . . . and gentle as a fawn; then courteous—courteous to *all*, high or low, grand or grotesque, King or Caterpillar . . . trustful, with an absolute trust. . . .

and so on. It depends what you expect of a child of seven.

. . . she had quite a long argument with the Lory, who at last turned sulky, and would only say, "I am older than you, and must know better"; and this Alice would not allow without knowing how old it was, and as the Lory positively refused to tell its age, there was no more to be said.

Alice had to be made to speak up to bring out the points—here the point is a sense of the fundamental oddity of life given by the fact that different animals become grown-up at different ages; but still if you accept the Lory as a grownup this is rather a pert child. She is often the underdog speaking up for itself.

A quite separate feeling about children, which is yet at the back of the pertness here and in the Goldsmith, since it is needed if the pertness is to be charming, may be seen in its clearest form in Wordsworth and Coleridge; it is the whole point of the *Ode to Intimations* and even of *We are Seven*. The child has not yet been put wrong by civilization, and all grownups have been. It may well be true that Dodgson envied the child because it was sexless, and Wordsworth because he knew that he was destroying his native poetry by the smugness of his life, but neither theory explains why this feeling about children arose when it did and became so general. There is much of it in Vaughan after the Civil War, but as a general tendency it appeared when the eighteenth-century settlement had come to seem narrow and unescapable; one might connect it with the end of duelling; also when the scientific sort of truth had been generally accepted as the main and real one. It strengthened as the aristocracy became more puritan. It depends on a feeling, whatever may have caused that in its turn, that no way of building up character, no intellectual system, can bring out all that is inherent in the human spirit, and therefore that there is more in the child than any man has been able to keep. (The child is a microcosm like Donne's world, and Alice too is a stoic.) This runs through all Victorian and Romantic literature; the world of the adult made it hard to be an artist, and they kept a sort of taproot going down to their experience as children. Artists like Wordsworth and Coleridge, who accepted this fact and used it, naturally come to seem the most interesting and in a way the most sincere writers of the period. Their idea of the child, that it is in the right relation to Nature, not dividing what should be unified, that its intuitive judgment contains what poetry and philosophy must spend their time laboring to recover, was accepted by Dodgson and a main part of his feeling. He quotes Wordsworth on this point in the "Easter Greeting"—the

child feels its life in every limb; Dodgson advises it, with an infelicitous memory of the original poem, to give its attention to death from time to time. That the dream books are

Like Pilgrim's withered wreaths of flowers
Plucked in a far-off land

is a fine expression of Wordsworth's sense both of the poetry of childhood and of his advancing sterility. And the moment when she finds herself dancing with Tweedledum and Tweedledee, so that it is difficult to introduce herself afterwards, is a successful interruption of Wordsworthian sentiment into his normal style.

. . . she took hold of both hands at once; the next moment they were dancing round in a ring. This seemed quite natural (she remembered afterwards), and she was not even surprised to hear music playing: it seemed to come from the tree under which they were dancing, and it was done (as well as she could make out) by the branches rubbing one against another, like fiddles and fiddle-sticks. . . . "I don't know when I began it, but somehow I felt as if I had been singing it a long long time."

This is presented as like the odd behavior of comic objects such as soup tureens, but it is a directer version of the idea of the child's unity with nature. She has been singing a long long time because she sang with no temporal limits in that imperial palace whence she came. Yet it is the frank selfishness of the brothers, who being little boys are horrid, are made into a satire on war, and will only give her the hands free from hugging each other, that forces her into the ring with them that produces eternity. Even here this puts a subtle doubt into the eternities open to the child.

For Dodgson will only go halfway with the sentiment of the child's unity with nature, and has another purpose for his heroine; she is the free and independent mind. Not that this is contradictory; because she is right about life she is independent from all the other characters who are wrong. But it is important to him because it enables him to clash the Wordsworth sentiments with the other main tradition about children derived from rogue sentiment. (For both, no doubt, he had to go some way back; the intervening

sentiment about children is that the great thing is to repress their Original Sin, and I suppose, though he would not have much liked it, he was among the obscure influences that led to the cult of games in the public schools.)

One might say that the Alices differ from other versions of pastoral in lacking the sense of glory. Normally the idea of including all sorts of men in yourself brings in an idea of reconciling yourself with nature and therefore gaining power over it. The Alices are more self-protective; the dream cuts out the real world and the delicacy of the mood is felt to cut out the lower classes. This is true enough, but when Humpty Dumpty says that glory means a nice knockdown argument he is not far from the central feeling of the book. There is a real feeling of isolation and yet just that is taken as the source of power.

The obvious parody of Wordsworth is the poem of the White Knight, an important figure for whom Dodgson is willing to break the language of humor into the language of sentiment. It takes off *Resolution and Independence*, a genuine pastoral poem if ever there was one; the endurance of the leech-gatherer gives Wordsworth strength to face the pain of the world. Dodgson was fond of saying that one parodied the best poems, or anyway that parody showed no lack of admiration, but a certain bitterness is inherent in parody; if the meaning is not "This poem is absurd" it must be "In my present mood of emotional sterility the poem will not work, or I am afraid to let it work, on *me*." The parody here will have no truck with the dignity of the leech-gatherer, but the point of that is to make the unworldly dreaminess of the Knight more absurd; there may even be a reproach for Wordsworth in the lack of consideration that makes him go on asking the same question. One feels that the Knight has probably imagined most of the old man's answers, or anyway that the old man was playing up to the fool who questioned him. At any rate there is a complete shift of interest from the virtues of the leech-gatherer onto the childish but profound virtues of his questioner.

The main basis of the joke is the idea of absurd inventions of new foods. Dodgson was well-informed about food, kept his old menus and was winetaster to the College; but ate very little, sus-

pected the High Table of overeating, and would see no reason to deny that he connected overeating with other forms of sensuality. One reason for the importance of rich food here is that it is the child's symbol for all luxuries reserved for grownups. I take it that the fascination of Soup and of the Mock Turtle who sings about it was that soup is mainly eaten at dinner, the excitingly grown-up meal eaten after the child has gone to bed. When Alice talks about her dinner she presumably means lunch, and it is rather a boast when she says she has already met whiting. In the White Knight's song and conversation these little jokes based on fear of sensuality are put to a further use; he becomes the scientist, the inventor, whose mind is nobly but absurdly detached from interest in the pleasures of the senses and even from "good sense."

"How *can* you go on talking so quietly, head downwards?" Alice asked, as she dragged him out by the feet, and laid him in a heap on the bank.

The Knight looked surprised at the question. "What does it matter where my body happens to be?" he said. "My mind goes on working all the same. In fact, the more head downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things."

"Now the cleverest thing that I ever did," he went on after a pause, "was inventing a new pudding during the meat-course."

This required extreme detachment; the word "clever" has become a signal that the mind is being admired for such a reason. The more absurd the assumptions of the thinking, for instance those of scientific materialism, the more vigorous the thought based upon it. "Life is so strange that his results have the more chance of being valuable because his assumptions are absurd, but we must not forget that they are so." This indeed is as near the truth as one need get about scientific determinism.

One reason for the moral grandeur of the Knight, then, is that he stands for the Victorian scientist, who was felt to have invented a new kind of Roman virtue; earnestly, patiently, carefully (it annoyed Samuel Butler to have these words used so continually about scientists) without sensuality, without self-seeking, without claiming any but a fragment of knowledge, he goes on laboring at his absurd but fruitful conceptions. But the parody makes him

stand also for the poet, and Wordsworth would have been pleased by this; he considered that the poet was essentially one who revived our sense of the original facts of nature, and should use scientific ideas where he could; poetry was the impassioned expression of the face of all science; Wordsworth was as successful in putting life into the abstract words of science as into "the plain language of men," and many of the Lyrical Ballads are best understood as psychological notes written in a form that saves one from forgetting their actuality. The Knight has the same readiness to accept new ideas and ways of life, such as the sciences were imposing, without ceasing to be good and in his way sensible, as Alice herself shows for instance when in falling down the rabbit hole she plans a polite entry into the Antipodes and is careful not to drop the marmalade onto the inhabitants. It is the childishness of the Knight that lets him combine the virtues of the poet and the scientist, and one must expect a creature so finely suited to life to be absurd because life itself is absurd.

The talking animal convention and the changes of relative size appear in so different a children's book as *Gulliver*; they evidently make some direct appeal to the child whatever more sophisticated ideas are piled onto them. Children feel at home with animals conceived as human; the animal can be made affectionate without its making serious emotional demands on them, does not want to educate them, is at least unconventional in the sense that it does not impose its conventions, and does not make a secret of the processes of nature. So the talking animals here are a child world; the rule about them is that they are always friendly though childishly frank to Alice while she is small, and when she is big (suggesting grown-up) always opposed to her, or by her, or both. But talking animals in children's books had been turned to didactic purposes ever since Aesop; the schoolmastering tone in which the animals talk nonsense to Alice is partly a parody of this—they are really childish but try not to look it. On the other hand, this tone is so supported by the way they can order her about, the firm and surprising way their minds work, the abstract topics they work on, the useless rules they accept with so much conviction, that we take them as real grownups contrasted with unsophisticated child-

hood. "The grown-up world is as odd as the child world, and both are a dream." This ambivalence seems to correspond to Dodgson's own attitude to children; he, like Alice, wanted to get the advantages of being childish and grown-up at once. In real life this seems to have at least occasional disadvantages both ways; one remembers the little girl who screamed and demanded to be taken from the lunch table because she knew she couldn't solve his puzzles (not, apparently, a usual, but one would think a natural reaction to his mode of approach)—she clearly thought him too grown-up; whereas in the scenes of jealousy with his little girls' parents the grownups must have thought him quite enough of a child. He made a success of the process, and it seems clear that it did none of the little girls any harm, but one cannot help cocking one's eye at it as a way of life.

The changes of size are more complex. In Gulliver they are the impersonal eye; to change size and nothing else makes you feel "this makes one see things as they are in themselves." It excites Wonder but of a scientific sort. Swift used it for satire on science or from a horrified interest in it, and to give a sort of scientific authority to his deductions, that men seen as small are spiritually petty and seen as large physically loathsome. And it is the small observer, like the child, who does least to alter what he sees and therefore sees most truly. (The definition of potential, in all but the most rigid textbooks of electricity, contents itself with talking about the force on a *small* charge which doesn't alter the field *much*. The objection that the small alteration in the field might be proportional to the small force does not occur easily to the reader.) To mix this with a pious child's type of Wonder made science seem less irreligious and gave you a feeling that you were being good because educating a child; Faraday's talks for children on the chemical history of a candle came out in 1861, so the method was in the air. But these are special uses of a material rich in itself. Children like to think of being so small that they could hide from grownups and so big that they could control them, and to do this dramatizes the great topic of growing up, which both Alices keep to consistently. In the same way the charm of Jabberwocky is that it is a code language, the language with which grownups

hide things from children or children from grownups. Also the words are such good tongue gestures, in Sir Richard Paget's phrase, that they seem to carry their own meaning; this carries a hint of the paradox that the conventions are natural.

Both books also keep to the topic of death—the first two jokes about death in *Wonderland* come on pages 3 and 4—and for the child this may be a natural connection; I remember believing I should have to die before I grew up, and thinking the prospect very disagreeable. There seems to be a connection in Dodgson's mind between the death of childhood and the development of sex, which might be pursued into many of the details of the books. Alice will die if the Red King wakes up, partly because she is a dream product of the author and partly because the pawn is put back in its box at the end of the game. He is the absent husband of the Red Queen who is a governess, and the end of the book comes when Alice defeats the Red Queen and "mates" the King. Everything seems to break up because she arrives at a piece of *knowledge*, that all the poems are about fish. I should say the idea was somehow at work at the end of *Wonderland* too. The trial is meant to be a mystery; Alice is told to leave the court, as if a child ought not to hear the evidence, and yet they expect her to give evidence herself.

"What do you know about this business?" the King said to Alice.

"Nothing," said Alice.

"Nothing *whatever*?" persisted the King.

"Nothing whatever," said Alice.

"That's very important," the King said, turning to the jury. They were just beginning to write this down on their slates, when the White Rabbit interrupted: "*Unimportant*, your Majesty means, of course," he said in a very respectful tone, but frowning and making faces as he spoke.

"*Unimportant*, of course, I meant," the King hastily said, and went on to himself in an undertone, "important—unimportant—unimportant—important—" as if he were trying which word sounded best.

There is no such stress in the passage as would make one feel there must be something behind it, and certainly it is funny enough as

it stands. But I think Dodgson felt it was important that Alice should be innocent of all knowledge of what the Knave of Hearts (a flashy-looking lady's man in the picture) is likely to have been doing, and also important that she should not be told she is innocent. That is why the king, always a well-intentioned man, is embarrassed. At the same time Dodgson feels that Alice is right in thinking "it doesn't matter a bit" which word the jury write down; she is too stable in her detachment to be embarrassed, these things will not interest her, and in a way she includes them all in herself. And it is the refusal to let her stay that makes her revolt and break the dream. It is tempting to read an example of this idea into the poem that introduces the *Looking-Glass*.

Come, hearken then, ere voice of dread,
With bitter summons laden,
Shall summon to unwelcome bed
A melancholy maiden.

After all the marriage bed was more likely to be the end of the maiden than the grave, and the metaphor firmly implied treats them as identical.

The last example is obviously more a joke against Dodgson than anything else, and though the connection between death and the development of sex is I think at work, it is not the main point of the conflict about growing up. Alice is given a magical control over her growth by the traditionally symbolic caterpillar, a creature which has to go through a sort of death to become grown-up, and then seems a more spiritual creature. It refuses to agree with Alice that this process is at all peculiar, and clearly her own life will be somehow like it, but the main idea is not its development of sex. The butterfly implied may be the girl when she is "out" or her soul when in heaven, to which she is now nearer than she will be when she is "out"; she must walk to it by walking away from it. Alice knows several reasons why she should object to growing up, and does not at all like being an obvious angel, a head out of contact with its body that has to come down from the sky, and gets mistaken for the Paradisal serpent of the knowledge of good and evil, and by the pigeon of the Annunciation, too.

But she only makes herself smaller for reasons of tact or proportion; the triumphant close of *Wonderland* is that she has outgrown her fancies and can afford to wake and despise them. The *Looking-Glass* is less of a dream product, less concentrated on the child's situation, and (once started) less full of changes of size; but it has the same end; the governess shrinks to a kitten when Alice has grown from a pawn to a queen, and can shake her. Both these clearly stand for becoming grown-up and yet in part are a revolt against grown-up behavior; there is the same ambivalence as about the talking animals. Whether children often find this symbolism as interesting as Carroll did is another thing; there are recorded cases of tears at such a betrayal of the reality of the story. I remember feeling that the ends of the books were a sort of necessary assertion that the grown-up world was after all the proper one; one did not object to that in principle, but would no more turn to those parts from preference than to the "Easter Greeting to Every Child that Loves Alice" (Gothic type).

To make the dream story from which *Wonderland* was elaborated seem Freudian one has only to tell it. A fall through a deep hole into the secrets of Mother Earth produces a new enclosed soul wondering who it is, what will be its position in the world, and how it can get out. It is in a long low hall, part of the palace of the Queen of Hearts (a neat touch), from which it can only get out to the fresh air and the fountains through a hole frighteningly too small. Strange changes, caused by the way it is nourished there, happen to it in this place, but always when it is big it cannot get out and when it is small it is not allowed to; for one thing, being a little girl, it has no key. The nightmare theme of the birth trauma, that she grows too big for the room and is almost crushed by it, is not only used here but repeated more painfully after she seems to have got out; the rabbit sends her sternly into its house and some food there makes her grow again. In Dodgson's own drawing of Alice when cramped into the room with one foot up the chimney, kicking out the hateful thing that tries to come down (she takes away its pencil when it is a juror), she is much more obviously in the fetus position than in Tenniel's. The White Rabbit is Mr. Spooner to whom the spoonerisms happened, an under-

graduate in 1862, but its business here is as a pet for children which they may be allowed to breed. Not that the clearness of the framework makes the interpretation simple; Alice peering through the hole into the garden may be wanting a return to the womb as well as an escape from it; she is fond, we are told, of taking both sides of an argument when talking to herself, and the whole book balances between the luscious nonsense world of fantasy and the ironic nonsense world of fact.

I said that the sea of tears she swims in was the amniotic fluid, which is much too simple. You may take it as Lethe in which the souls were bathed before rebirth (and it is their own tears; they forget, as we forget our childhood, through the repression of pain) or as the "solution" of an intellectual contradiction through Intuition and a return to the Unconscious. Anyway it is a sordid image made pretty; one need not read Dodgson's satirical verses against babies to see how much he would dislike a child wallowing in its tears in real life. The fondness of small girls for doing this has to be faced early in attempting to prefer them, possibly to small boys, certainly to grownups; to a man idealizing children as free from the falsity of a rich emotional life their displays of emotion must be particularly disconcerting. The celibate may be forced to observe them, on the floor of a railway carriage for example, after a storm of fury, dabbling in their ooze; covertly snuggling against mamma while each still pretends to ignore the other. The symbolic pleasure of dabbling seems based on an idea that the liquid itself is the bad temper which they have got rid of by the storm and yet are still hugging, or that they are not quite impotent since they have at least "done" this much about the situation. The acid quality of the style shows that Dodgson does not entirely like having to love creatures whose narcissism takes this form, but he does not want simply to forget it as he too would like a relief from "ill temper"; he sterilizes it from the start by giving it a charming myth. The love for narcissists itself seems mainly based on a desire to keep oneself safely detached, which is the essential notion here.

The symbolic completeness of Alice's experience is I think important. She runs the whole gamut; she is a father in getting down

the hole, a fetus at the bottom, and can only be born by becoming a mother and producing her own amniotic fluid. Whether his mind played the trick of putting this into the story or not he has the feelings that would correspond to it. A desire to include all sexuality in the girl child, the least obviously sexed of human creatures, the one that keeps its sex in the safest place, was an important part of their fascination for him. He is partly imagining himself as the girl child (with these comforting characteristics) partly as its father (these together make *it* a father) partly as its lover—so it might be a mother—but then of course it is clever and detached enough to do everything for itself. He told one of his little girls a story about cats wearing gloves over their claws: “For you see, ‘gloves’ have got ‘love’ inside them—there’s none outside, you know.” So far from its dependence, the child’s independence is the important thing, and the theme behind that is the self-centered emotional life imposed by the detached intelligence.

The famous cat is a very direct symbol of this ideal of intellectual detachment; all cats are detached, and since this one grins it is the amused observer. It can disappear because it can abstract itself from its surroundings into a more interesting inner world; it appears only as a head because it is almost a disembodied intelligence, and only as a grin because it can impose an atmosphere without being present. In frightening the king by the allowable act of looking at him it displays the soul force of Mr. Gandhi; it is unbeheadable because its soul cannot be killed; and its influence brings about a short amnesty in the divided nature of the Queen and Duchess. Its cleverness makes it formidable—it has very long claws and a great many teeth—but Alice is particularly at home with it; she is the same sort of thing.

The Gnat gives a more touching picture of Dodgson; he treats nowhere more directly of his actual relations with the child. He feels he is liable to nag at it, as a gnat would, and the gnat turns out, as he is, to be alarmingly big as a friend for the child, but at first it sounds tiny because he means so little to her. It tries to amuse her by rather frightening accounts of other dangerous insects, other grownups. It is reduced to tears by the melancholy of its own jokes, which it usually can’t bear to finish; only if Alice

had made them, as it keeps egging her on to do, would they be at all interesting. That at least would show the child had paid some sort of attention, and he could go away and repeat them to other people. The desire to have jokes made all the time, he feels, is a painful and obvious confession of spiritual discomfort, and the freedom of Alice from such a feeling makes her unapproachable.

"Don't tease so," said Alice, looking about in vain to see where the voice came from; "if you're so anxious to have a joke made, why don't you make one yourself?"

The little voice sighed deeply: it was *very* unhappy, evidently, and Alice would have said something pitying to comfort it, "if it would only sigh like other people!" she thought. But this was such a wonderfully small sigh, that she wouldn't have heard it at all, if it hadn't come *quite* close to her ear. The consequence of this was that it tickled her ear very much, and quite took off her thoughts from the unhappiness of the poor little creature.

"*I know you are a friend,*" the little voice went on; "*a dear friend, and an old friend. And you won't hurt me, though I am an insect.*"

"What kind of insect?" Alice inquired a little anxiously. What she really wanted to know was, whether it could sting or not, but she thought this wouldn't be quite a civil question to ask.

"*What, then you don't—*" the little voice began. . . .

"Don't know who I am! Does anybody not know who I am?" He is afraid that even so innocent a love as his, like all love, may be cruel, and yet it is she who is able to hurt him, if only through his vanity. The implications of these few pages are so painful that the ironical calm of the close, when she kills it, seems delightfully gay and strong. The Gnat is suggesting to her that she would like to remain purely a creature of Nature and stay in the wood where there are no names.

". . . That's a joke. I wish *you* had made it."

"Why do you wish *I* had made it?" Alice asked. "It's a very bad one."

But the Gnat only sighed deeply, while two large tears came rolling down its cheeks.

"You shouldn't make jokes," Alice said, "if it makes you so unhappy."

Then came another of those melancholy little sighs, and this time the poor Gnat really seemed to have sighed itself away, for, when Alice looked up, there was nothing whatever to be seen on the twig, and, as she was getting quite chilly with sitting so long, she got up and walked on.

The overpunctuation and the flat assonance of "long—on" add to the effect. There is something charmingly prim and well-meaning about the way she sweeps aside the feelings that she can't deal with. One need not suppose that Dodgson ever performed this scene, which he can imagine so clearly, but there is too much self-knowledge here to make the game of psychoanalysis seem merely good fun.

The scene in which the Duchess has become friendly to Alice at the garden party shows Alice no longer separate from her creator; it is clear that Dodgson would be as irritated as she is by the incident, and is putting himself in her place. The obvious way to read it is as the middle-aged woman trying to flirt with the chaste young man.

"The game seems to be going on rather better now," she said.

"'Tis so," said the Duchess; "and the moral of it is—'Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!'"

"Somebody said," whispered Alice, "that it's done by everybody minding their own business!"

"Ah, well! It means much the same thing," said the Duchess, digging her sharp little chin into Alice's shoulder as she added, "and the moral of *that* is—'Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves.'"

"How fond she is of finding morals in things," Alice thought to herself.

Both are true because the generous and the selfish kinds of love have the same name; the Duchess seems to take the view of the political economists, that the greatest public good is produced by the greatest private selfishness. All this talk about "morals" makes Alice suspicious; also she is carrying a flamingo, a pink bird with a long neck. "The chief difficulty Alice found at first was in managing her flamingo . . . it *would* twist itself round and look up in her face."

"I dare say you're wondering why I don't put my arm round your waist," the Duchess said after a pause: "the reason is, that I'm doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Shall I try the experiment?"

"He might bite," Alice cautiously replied, not feeling at all anxious to have the experiment tried.

"Very true," said the Duchess: "flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is—'Birds of a feather flock together.'"

Mustard may be classed with the pepper that made her "ill-tempered" when she had so much of it in the soup, so that flamingoes and mustard become the desires of the two sexes. No doubt Dodgson would be indignant at having this meaning read into his symbols, but the meaning itself, if he had been intending to talk about the matter, is just what he would have wished to say.

The Duchess then jumps away to another aspect of the selfishness of our nature.

"It's a mineral, I *think*," said Alice.

"Of course it is," said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to everything that Alice said; "there's a large mustard-mine near here. And the moral of that is—'The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours.'"

One could put the same meanings in again, but a new one has come forward: "Industrialism is as merely greedy as sex; all we get from it is a sharper distinction between rich and poor." They go off into riddles about sincerity and how one can grow into what one would seem to be.

This sort of "analysis" is a peep at machinery; the question for criticism is what is done with the machine. The purpose of a dream on the Freudian theory is simply to keep you in an undisturbed state so that you can go on sleeping; in the course of this practical work you may produce something of more general value, but not only of one sort. Alice has, I understand, become a patron saint of the Surrealists, but they do not go in for Comic Primness, a sort of reserve of force, which is her chief charm. Wyndham Lewis avoided putting her beside Proust and Lorelei to be danced on as

a debilitating child cult (though she is a bit of pragmatist too); the present-day reader is more likely to complain of her complacency. In this sort of child cult the child, though a means of imaginative escape, becomes the critic; Alice is the most reasonable and responsible person in the book. This is meant as charmingly pathetic about her as well as satire about her elders, and there is some implication that the sane man can take no other view of the world, even for controlling it, than the child does; but this is kept a good distance from sentimental infantilism. There is always some doubt about the meaning of a man who says he wants to be like a child, because he may want to be like it in having fresh and vivid feelings and senses, in not knowing, expecting, or desiring evil, in not having an analytical mind, in having no sexual desires recognizable as such, or out of a desire to be mothered and evade responsibility. He is usually mixing them up—Christ's praise of children, given perhaps for reasons I have failed to list, has made it a respected thing to say, and it has been said often and loosely—but he can make his own mixture; Lewis' invective hardly shows which he is attacking. The praise of the child in the *Alices* mainly depends on a distaste not only for sexuality but for all the distortions of vision that go with a rich emotional life; the opposite idea needs to be set against this, that you can only understand people or even things by having such a life in yourself to be their mirror; but the idea itself is very respectable. So far as it is typical of the scientist the books are an expression of the scientific attitude (*e.g.* the bread-and-butter fly) or a sort of satire on it that treats it as inevitable.

The most obvious aspect of the complacency is the snobbery. It is clear that Alice is not only a very well-brought-up but a very well-to-do little girl; if she has grown into Mabel, so that she will have to go and live in that poky little house and have next to no toys to play with, she will refuse to come out of her rabbit hole at all. One is only surprised that she is allowed to meet Mabel. All through the books odd objects of luxury are viewed rather as Wordsworth viewed mountains; meaningless, but grand and irremovable; objects of myth. The whiting, the talking leg of mutton,

the soup tureen, the tea tray in the sky, are obvious examples. The shift from the idea of the child's unity with nature is amusingly complete; a mere change in the objects viewed makes it at one with the conventions. But this is still not far from Wordsworth, who made his mountains into symbols of the stable and moral society living among them. In part the joke of this stands for the sincerity of the child that criticizes the folly of convention, but Alice is very respectful to conventions and interested to learn new ones; indeed the discussions about the rules of the game of conversation, those stern comments on the isolation of humanity, put the tone so strongly in favor of the conventions that one feels there is nothing else in the world. There is a strange clash on this topic about the three little sisters discussed at the Mad Tea Party, who lived on treacle. "They couldn't have done that, you know," Alice gently remarked, "they'd have been ill." "So they were," said the Dormouse, "*very ill*." The creatures are always self-centered and argumentative, to stand for the detachment of the intellect from emotion, which is necessary to it and yet makes it childish. Then the remark stands both for the danger of taking as one's guide the natural desires ("this is the sort of thing little girls would do if they were left alone") and for a pathetic example of a martyrdom to the conventions; the little girls did not mind *how* ill they were made by living on treacle, because it was their rule, and they knew it was expected of them. (That they are refined girls is clear from the fact that they do allegorical sketches.) There is an obscure connection here with the belief of the period that a really nice girl is "delicate" (the profound sentences implied by the combination of meanings in this word are (a) "you cannot get a woman to be refined unless you make her ill" and more darkly (b) "she is desirable because corpse-like"); Dodgson was always shocked to find that his little girls had appetites, because it made them seem less pure. The passage about the bread-and-butter fly brings this out more frankly, with something of the willful grimness of Webster. It was a creature of such high refinement that it could only live on weak tea with cream in it (tea being the caller's meal, sacred to the fair, with nothing gross about it).

A new difficulty came into Alice's head.

"Supposing it couldn't find any?" she suggested.

"Then it would die, of course."

"But that must happen very often," Alice remarked thoughtfully.

"It always happens," said the Gnat.

After this, Alice was silent for a minute or two, pondering.

There need be no gloating over the child's innocence here, as in Barrie; anybody might ponder. Alice has just suggested that flies burn themselves to death in candles out of a martyr's ambition to become Snapdragon flies. The talk goes on to losing one's name, which is the next stage on her journey, and brings freedom but is like death; the girl may lose her personality by growing up into the life of convention, and her virginity (like her surname) by marriage; or she may lose her "good name" when she loses the conventions "in the woods"—the animals, etc., there have no names because they are out of reach of the controlling reason; or when she develops sex she must neither understand nor name her feelings. The Gnat is weeping and Alice is afraid of the wood but determined to go on. "It always dies of thirst" or "it always dies in the end, as do we all"; "the life of highest refinement is the most deathly, yet what else is one to aim at when life is so brief, and when there is so little in it of any value." A certain ghouliness in the atmosphere of this, of which the tight lacing may have been a product or partial cause,¹ comes out very strongly in Henry James; the decadents pounced on it for their own purposes but could not put more death wishes into it than these respectables had done already.

The blend of child cult and snobbery that Alice shares with Oscar Wilde is indeed much more bouncing and cheerful; the theme here is that it is proper for the well-meaning and innocent girl to be worldly, because she, like the world, should know the value of her condition. "When we were girls we were brought up to know nothing, and very interesting it was"; "mamma, whose ideas on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely shortsighted; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?" This joke seems to have come in after the Restoration dramatists as innocence recovered its social value;

there are touches in Farquhar and it is strong in the *Beggar's Opera*. Sheridan has full control of it for Mrs. Malaprop.

I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman. . . . But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might learn something of the contagious countries; but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying.

Dodgson has an imitation of this which may show, what many of his appreciators seem anxious to deny, that even *Wonderland* contains straight satire. The Mock Turtle was taught at school

Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with, and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision . . . Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography; then Drawling—the Drawling-master used to come once a week; *he* taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.

Children are to enjoy the jokes as against education, grownups as against a smart and too expensive education. Alice was not one of the climbers taught like this, and remarks firmly elsewhere that manners are not learned from lessons. But she willingly receives social advice like "curtsey while you're thinking what to say, it saves time," and the doctrine that you must walk away from a queen if you really want to meet her has more point when said of the greed of the climber than of the unself-seeking curiosity of the small girl. Or it applies to both, and allows the climber a sense of purity and simplicity; I think this was a source of charm whether Dodgson meant it or not. Alice's own social assumptions are more subtle and all-pervading; she always seems to raise the tone of the company she enters, and to find this all the easier because the creatures are so rude to her. A central idea here is that the perfect lady can gain all the advantages of contempt without soiling herself by expressing or even feeling it.

This time there could be no mistake about it; it was neither more nor less than a pig, and she felt that it would be quite absurd for her to carry it any further. So she set the little creature down, and felt quite relieved to see it trot quietly away into the wood. "If it had grown up," she said to herself, "it would have made a dreadfully ugly child, but it makes rather a handsome pig, I think." And she began thinking over other children she knew, who might do very well as pigs, and was just saying to herself, "if only one knew the right way to change them—" when she was a little startled by seeing the Cheshire Cat on the bough of a tree a few yards off.

The Cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured, she thought: still it had very long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect.

The effect of cuddling these mellow evasive phrases—"a good deal"—"do very well as"—whose vagueness can convey so rich an irony and so complete a detachment, while making so firm a claim to show charming good will, is very close to that of Wilde's comedy. So is the hint of a delicious slavishness behind the primness, and contrasting with the irony, of the last phrase. (But then Dodgson feels the cat deserves respect as the detached intelligence—he is enjoying the idea that Alice and other social figures have got to respect Dodgson.) I think there is a feeling that the aristocrat is essentially like the child because it is his business to make claims in advance of his immediate personal merits; the child is not strong yet, and the aristocrat only as part of a system; the best he can do if actually asked for his credentials, since it would be indecent to produce his pedigree, is to display charm and hope it will appear unconscious, like the good young girl. Wilde's version of this leaves rather a bad taste in the mouth because it is slavish; it has something of the naïve snobbery of the high-class servant. Whistler meant this by the most crashing of his insults—"Oscar now stands forth unveiled as his own 'gentleman'"—when Wilde took shelter from a charge of plagiarism behind the claim that a gentleman does not attend to coarse abuse.

Slavish, for one thing, because they were always juggling between what they themselves thought wicked and what the society they addressed thought wicked, talking about sin when they meant

scandal. The thrill of *Pen, Pencil and Poison* is in the covert comparison between Wilde himself and the poisoner, and Wilde certainly did not think his sexual habits as wicked as killing a friend to annoy an insurance company. By their very hints that they deserved notice as sinners they pretended to accept all the moral ideas of society, because they wanted to succeed in it, and yet society only took them seriously because they were connected with an intellectual movement which refused to accept some of those ideas. The Byronic theme of the man unable to accept the moral ideas of his society and yet torn by his feelings about them is real and permanent, but to base it on intellectual dishonesty is to short-circuit it; and leads to a claim that the life of highest refinement must be allowed a certain avid infantile petulance.

Alice is not a slave like this; she is almost too sure that she is good and right. The grownup is egged on to imitate her not as a privileged decadent but as a privileged eccentric, a Victorian figure that we must be sorry to lose. The eccentric though kind and noble would be alarming from the strength of his virtues if he were less funny; Dodgson saw to it that this underlying feeling about his monsters was brought out firmly by Tenniel, who had been trained on drawing very serious things like the British Lion weeping over Gordon, for *Punch*. Their massive and romantic nobility is, I think, an important element in the effect; Dodgson did not get it in his own drawings (nor, by the way, did he give all the young men eunuchoid legs) but no doubt he would have done so if he had been able. I should connect this weighty background with the tone of worldly goodness, of universal but not stupid charity, in Alice's remarks about the pig: "I shall do my best even for you; of course one will suffer, because you are not worth the efforts spent on you; but I have no temptation to be uncharitable to you because I am too far above you to need to put you in your place"—this is what her tone would develop into; a genuine readiness for self-sacrifice and a more genuine sense of power.

The qualities held in so subtle a suspension in Alice are shown in full blast in the two queens. It is clear that this sort of moral superiority involves a painful isolation, similar to those involved in the intellectual way of life and the life of chastity, which are

here associated with it. The reference to *Maud* (1855) brings this out. It was a shocking book; mockery was deserved; and its improper freedom was parodied by the flowers at the beginning of the *Looking-Glass*. A taint of fussiness hangs over this sort of essay, but the parodies were assumed to be obvious (children who aren't forced to learn Dr. Watts can't get the same thrill from parodies of him as the original children did) and even this parody is not as obvious as it was. There is no doubt that the flowers are much funnier if you compare them with their indestructible originals.

 whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
 In violets blue as your eyes . . .
 the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
 Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake . . .
Queen rose of the rose-bud garden of girls. . . .
There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
 She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near";
 And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear";
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

"It isn't manners for us to begin, you know," said the Rose, "and I really was wondering when you'd speak." . . . "How is it that you all talk so nicely?" Alice said, hoping to get it into a better temper by a compliment. . . . "In most gardens," the Tiger-Lily said, "they make the beds too soft, so that the flowers are always asleep." This sounded a very good reason, and Alice was quite pleased to know it. "I never thought of that before!" she said. "It's *my* opinion you never think *at all*," the Rose said in rather a severe tone. "I never saw anybody that looked stupider," a Violet said, so suddenly, that Alice quite jumped; for it hadn't spoken before. . . . "She's coming!" cried the Larkspur. "I hear her footstep, thump, thump, along the gravelwalk!" Alice looked round eagerly, and found that it was the Red Queen—

the concentrated essence, Dodgson was to explain, of all governorships. The Tiger Lily was originally a Passionflower, but it was

explained to Dodgson in time that the passion meant was not that of sexual desire (which he relates to ill-temper) but of Christ; a brilliant recovery was made after the shock of this, for *Tiger-Lily* includes both the alarming fierceness of ideal passion (chaste till now) and the ill-temper of the life of virtue and self-sacrifice typified by the governess (chaste always). So that in effect he includes all the flowers Tennyson named. The willow tree that said Bough-Wough doesn't come in the poem, but it is a symbol of hopeless love anyway. The pink daisies turn white out of fear, as the white ones turn pink in the poem out of admiration. I don't know how far we ought to notice the remark about beds, which implies that they should be hard because even passion demands the virtues of asceticism (they are also the earthy beds of the grave); it fits in very well with the ideas at work, but does not seem a thing Dodgson would have said in clearer language.

But though he shied from the Christian association in the complex idea wanted from "Passion-Flower" the flowers make another one very firmly.

"But that's not *your* fault," the Rose added kindly: "you're beginning to fade, you know—and then one can't help one's petals getting a little untidy." Alice didn't like this idea at all: so, to change the subject, she asked "Does she ever come out here?" "I daresay you'll see her soon," said the Rose. "She's one of the thorny kind." "Where does she wear the thorns?" Alice asked with some curiosity. "Why, all round her head, of course," the Rose replied. "I was wondering *you* hadn't got some too. I thought it was the regular rule."

Death is never far out of sight in the books. The Rose cannot help standing for desire but its thorns here stand for the ill-temper not so much of passion as of chastity, that of the governess or that involved in ideal love. Then the thorns round the Queen's head, the "regular rule" for suffering humanity, not yet assumed by the child, stand for the Passion, the self-sacrifice of the most ideal and most generous love, which produces ugliness and ill-temper.

The joke of making romantic love ridiculous by applying it to undesired middle-aged women is less to be respected than the joke

of the hopelessness of idealism. W. S. Gilbert uses it for the same timid facetiousness but more offensively. This perhaps specially nineteenth-century trick is played about all the women in the Alices—the Ugly Duchess who had the aphrodisiac in the soup (pepper, as Alice pointed out, produces “ill-temper”) was the same person as the Queen in the first draft (“Queen of Hearts and Marchioness of Mock Turtles”) so that the Queen’s sentence of her is the suicide of disruptive passion. The Mock Turtle, who is half beef in the picture, with a cloven hoof, suffers from the calf love of a turtledove; he went to a bad school and is excited about dancing. (He is also weeping for his lost childhood, which Dodgson sympathized with while blaming its exaggeration, and Alice thought very queer; this keeps it from being direct satire.) So love is also ridiculous in young men; it is felt that these two cover the whole field (Dodgson was about thirty at the time) so that granted these points the world is safe for chastity. The danger was from middle-aged women because young women could be treated as pure like Alice. Nor indeed is this mere convention; Gilbert was relying on one of the more permanent jokes played by nature on civilization, that unless somewhat primitive methods are employed the specific desires of refined women may appear too late. So far as the chaste man uses this fact, and the fact that men are hurt by permanent chastity less than women, in order to insult women, no fuss that he may make about baby women will make him dignified. Dodgson keeps the theme fairly agreeable by connecting it with the more general one of self-sacrifice—which may be useless or harmful, even when spontaneous or part of a reasonable convention, which then makes the sacrificer ridiculous and crippled, but which even then makes him deserve respect and may give him unexpected sources of power. The man playing at child cult arrives at Sex War here (as usual since, but the comic Lear didn’t), but not to the death nor with all weapons.

The same ideas are behind the White Queen, the emotional as against the practical idealist. It seems clear that the Apologia (1864) is in sight when she believes the impossible for half an hour before breakfast, to keep in practice; I should interpret the two examples she gives as immortality and putting back the clock

of history, also Mass occurs before breakfast. All through the Wool and Water chapter (milk and water but not nourishing, and gritty to the teeth) she is Oxford; the life of learning rather than of dogmatic religion. Every one recognizes the local shop, the sham fights, the rowing, the academic old sheep, and the way it laughs scornfully when Alice doesn't know the technical slang of rowing; and there are some general reflections on education. The teacher willfully puts the egg a long way off, so that you have to walk after it yourself, and meanwhile it turns into something else; and when you have "paid for" the education its effects, then first known, must be accepted as part of you whether they are good or bad. Oxford as dreamy may be half satire half acceptance of Arnold's "adorable dreamer" purple patch (1865).

Once at least in each book a cry of loneliness goes up from Alice at the oddity beyond sympathy or communication of the world she has entered—whether that in which the child is shut by weakness, or the adult by the renunciations necessary both for the ideal and the worldly way of life (the strength of the snobbery is to imply that these are the same). It seems strangely terrible that the answers of the White Queen, on the second of these occasions, should be so unanswerable.

By this time it was getting light. "The crow must have flown away, I think," said Alice: "I'm so glad it's gone. I thought it was the night coming on."

Even in the rhyme the crow may be fear of death. The rhymes, like those other main structural materials, chess and cards, are useful because, being fixed, trivial, odd, and stirring to the imagination, they affect one as conventions of the dream world, and this sets the tone about conventions.

"I wish I could manage to be glad!" the Queen said. "Only I never can remember the rule. You must be very happy, living in this wood, and being glad whenever you like."

So another wood has turned out to be Nature. This use of "that's a rule" is Sheridan's in *The Critic*; the pathos of its futility is that it is an attempt of reason to do the work of emotion and escape the dangers of the emotional approach to life. There may be a

glance at the Oxford Movement and dogma. Perhaps chiefly a satire on the complacency of the fashion of slumming, the remark seems to spread out into the whole beauty and pathos of the ideas of pastoral; by its very universality her vague sympathy becomes an obscure self-indulgence.

"Only it is so very lonely here!" Alice said in a melancholy voice; and at the thought of her loneliness two large tears came rolling down her cheeks.

"Oh, don't go on like that," cried the poor Queen, wringing her hands in despair. "Consider what a great girl you are. Consider what a long way you've come to-day. Consider what o'clock it is. Consider anything, only don't cry!"

Alice could not help laughing at this, even in the midst of her tears. "Can you keep from crying by considering things?" she asked.

"That's the way it's done," the Queen said with great decision; "nobody can do two things at once, you know. Let's consider your age to begin with—how old are you?"

We are back at once to the crucial topic of age and the fear of death, and pass to the effectiveness of practice in helping one to believe the impossible; for example that the aging Queen is so old that she would be dead. The helplessness of the intellect, which claims to rule so much, is granted under cover of the counterclaim that since it makes you impersonal you can forget pain with it; we do not believe this about the Queen chiefly because she has not enough understanding of other people. The jerk of the return to age, and the assumption that this is a field for polite lying, make the work of the intellect only the game of conversation. Humpty Dumpty has the same embarrassing trick for arguing away a suggestion of loneliness. Indeed about all the rationalism of Alice and her acquaintances there hangs a suggestion that there are after all questions of pure thought, academic thought whose altruism is recognized and paid for, thought meant only for the upper classes to whom the conventions are in any case natural habit; like that suggestion that the scientist is sure to be a gentleman and has plenty of space which is the fascination of Kew Gardens.

The Queen is a very inclusive figure. "Looking before and after" with the plaintive tone of universal altruism she lives chiefly back-

wards, in history; the necessary darkness of growth, the mysteries of self-knowledge, the self-contradictions of the will, the antinomies of philosophy, the very Looking-Glass itself, impose this; nor is it mere weakness to attempt to resolve them only in the direct impulse of the child. Gathering the more dream rushes her love for man becomes the more universal, herself the more like a porcupine. Knitting with more and more needles she tries to control life by a more and more complex intellectual apparatus—the “progress” of Herbert Spencer; any one shelf of the shop is empty, but there is always something very interesting—the “atmosphere” of the place is so interesting—which moves up as you look at it from shelf to shelf; there is jam only in the future and our traditional past, and the test made by Alice, who sent value through the ceiling as if it were quite used to it, shows that progress can never reach value, because its habitation and name is heaven. The Queen’s scheme of social reform, which is to punish those who are not respectable before their crimes are committed, seems to be another of these jokes about progress:

“But if you *hadn’t* done them,” the Queen said, “that would have been better still; better, and better, and better!” Her voice went higher with each “better” till it got to quite a squeak at last.

There is a similar attack in the Walrus and the Carpenter, who are depressed by the spectacle of unimproved nature and engage in charitable work among oysters. The Carpenter is a Castle and the Walrus, who could eat so many more because he was crying behind his handkerchief, was a Bishop, in the scheme at the beginning of the book. But in saying so one must be struck by the depth at which the satire is hidden; the queerness of the incident and the characters takes on a Wordsworthian grandeur and aridity, and the landscape defined by the tricks of facetiousness takes on the remote and staring beauty of the ideas of the insane. It is odd to find that Tenniel went on to illustrate Poe in the same manner; Dodgson is often doing what Poe wanted to do, and can do it the more easily because he can safely introduce the absurd. The Idiot Boy of Wordsworth is too milky a moonlit creature to be at home with Nature as she was deplored by the Carpenter, and much of the

technique of the rudeness of the Mad Hatter has been learned from Hamlet. It is the ground bass of this kinship with insanity, I think, that makes it so clear that the books are not trifling, and the cool courage with which Alice accepts madmen that gives them their strength.

This talk about the snobbery of the Alices may seem a mere attack, but a little acid may help to remove the slime with which they have been encrusted. The two main ideas behind the snobbery, that virtue and intelligence are alike lonely, and that good manners are therefore important though an absurd confession of human limitations, do not depend on a local class system; they would be recognized in a degree by any tolerable society. And if in a degree their opposites must also be recognized, so they are here; there are solid enough statements of the shams of altruism and convention and their horrors when genuine; it is the forces of this conflict that make a clash violent enough to end both the dreams. In *Wonderland* this is mysteriously mixed up with the trial of the Knave of Hearts, the thief of love, but at the end of the second book the symbolism is franker and more simple. She is a grown queen and has acquired the conventional dignities of her insane world; suddenly she admits their insanity, refuses to be a grown queen, and destroys them.

"I can't stand this any longer!" she cried, as she seized the table-cloth in both hands: one good pull, and plates, dishes, guests, and candles came crashing down together in a heap on the floor.

The guests are inanimate and the crawling self-stultifying machinery of luxury has taken on a hideous life of its own. It is the High Table of Christ Church that we must think of here. The gentleman is not the slave of his conventions because at need he could destroy them; and yet, even if he did this, and all the more because he does not, he must adopt while despising it the attitude to them of the child.

¹ It was getting worse when the Alices were written. In what Mr. Hugh Kingsmill calls "the fatal fifties" skirts were so big that the small waist was not much needed for contrast, so it can't be blamed for the literary works of that decade.

GEOFFREY GORER

The Myth in Jane Austen

EVERYBODY, OR AT any rate nearly everybody, who is fond of English literature is devoted to the works of Jane Austen; that is pretty generally agreed. It is so generally agreed that it never seems to have occurred to anybody to inquire why these "pictures of domestic life in country villages," to use her own phrase, are able to excite such passionate adoration, or, if the inquiry is made, it is answered in terms of technique and observation. But I do not consider this answer adequate—after all, the almost unread Miss Emily Eden was not lacking in either of these qualities—and I wish to suggest that there are profounder reasons for the excessive love which she excites in so many of her admirers from Scott and Macaulay to Rudyard Kipling and Sir John Squire. The adoration of Miss Austen has at times nearly approached a cult—the sect of "Janeites"—and I propose to try to uncover the mystery behind the worship. The mystery is no unfamiliar one.

It is necessary to mention a few dates. Jane Austen was born in 1775, the youngest daughter of a country clergyman; her father died in 1805, and she then lived with her mother till her own death in 1817. She never married. In her correspondence she appears to

have been devoted to her brothers and sisters, particularly her next eldest sister Cassandra: two of her brothers were in the navy. She started writing very young, and the first motive which turned her to writing was, as is clearly shown by the juvenile *Love and Friendship*, satire, or, to use the contemporary phrase, debunking. During Jane Austen's youth the Gothic novel, with its exaggerated emotions and incredible occurrences, was at the height of its fantastic popularity. At that period as at all others in later European history, the emotions depicted in the most popular poetry and fiction of the time were reflected by the majority of their ardent readers. (Until Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald wrote, the behavior of "the lost generation" was not stereotyped.) The Gothic novel and the contemporary poetry—Byron and Scott—evoked greatly enhanced and self-indulged sensibility and poignant feeling. Jane Austen was temperamentally unable to feel these violent emotions and, as a realist, did not believe they were genuine. An example of her early attitude occurs in *Love and Friendship*, in which the heroine advises the narrator that, when she is overcome by powerful emotions, she should choose to run mad, rather than to go into fainting fits; the reason being that with running mad one gets some healthful exercise, whereas with continuous fainting one is likely to fall on damp places and catch pneumonia.

It was in this spirit of mockery that she wrote *Love and Friendship*, and to a great extent *Northanger Abbey* which was written in 1798; it was also one of the primary motivations in writing *Sense and Sensibility*, which was begun in 1797, but from internal evidence, was almost completely revised before it was published in 1813. *Pride and Prejudice*, which we know to have been completely recast from the first draft made in 1796, was published the same year. *Mansfield Park* was written in 1812–13, *Emma*, in 1814–15, and *Persuasion* in 1815–16. The order in which the books were written is important to my thesis.

Northanger Abbey is to a very great extent satirical, and much of the plot springs from the originals it is debunking; it shows certain features in common with the other novels, but I do not propose to study it in detail. *Persuasion*, the last novel of all, is so important as to need separate treatment. At the moment I wish

to discuss the four central novels, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, to give the order in which they were written and in which I shall refer to them.

These four novels, though differing in details and characters, have all the same central theme; and it is this theme which I call Jane Austen's myth. All four novels are about young women (Marianne, Elizabeth, Fanny, Emma) who are made love to by, but finally reject, the Charming but Worthless lover (Willoughby, Wickham, Crawford, Frank Churchill) and finally marry a man whom they esteem and admire rather than love passionately (Colonel Brandon, Darcy, Edmund Bertram, Mr. Knightley). But the similarities in the novels do not end here; in all except the last to be written, *Emma*, when Mrs. Woodhouse is dead before the novel opens, the heroine's misfortunes and discomforts are to a very great extent due to the folly, stupidity or malice of her mother (Mrs. Dashwood encourages Marianne in her romanticism; Mrs. Bennet's behavior is directly responsible for Elizabeth's and Jane's unhappiness (ch. 35) and, it is suggested, for Lydia's elopement; poor Fanny Price has no less than three stupid, incompetent and spiteful mothers—Mrs. Price, Aunt Bertram and Aunt Norris—and, though Emma is motherless, her dangerous flirtation with Frank Churchill is forwarded by her mother-surrogate, Mrs. Weston). As in three out of four of the novels the heroine actively dislikes her mother, so, in three out of four of the novels she marries a man who stands in an almost paternal relationship to her. Marianne Dashwood finally marries Colonel Brandon of whom she says (ch. 7) "He is old enough to be *my* father. . . . When is a man to be safe from such wit, if age and infirmity will not protect him?" Fanny Price marries Edmund Bertram who had been "loving, guiding, protecting her as he had been doing ever since she was ten years old, her mind in so great a degree formed by his care . . . etc." (ch. 48). It is true that Miss Austen insists that their relationship is that of brother and sister (ch. 37, 46), but it is an unusual fraternal relationship, with protection entirely on one side and respect on the other. Mr. Knightley stands in a quite overtly paternal relationship to Emma; indeed, with his feebleness and hypochondria Mr. Woodhouse seems more like the grandfather than the

father of a young woman. Mr. Knightley on the other hand fills every office of a father; "from family attachment and habit, and through excellence of mind, he had loved her and watched over her from a girl, with an endeavor to improve her, and an anxiety for her doing right, which no other creature had at all shared" (ch. 48). He scolds her and gives her advice (e.g. ch. 1, 43) and watches the progress of her studies (ch. 5), and, when she dances, stays with the other parents who watch the young people amusing themselves (ch. 38). It is the most obvious of the identifications.

Elizabeth, in *Pride and Prejudice*, does, it is true, marry young Mr. Darcy, but has anybody, even the author, been convinced that she loved him, or that she entertained any feelings warmer than respect or gratitude? Surely her own remark, that she must date her affection "from my first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley" (ch. 59), represents the psychological truth. Moreover, there are other passages in which Miss Austen reveals the type of emotion which connected Elizabeth and Darcy. A couple of days before she does finally accept him Elizabeth muses to herself "If he is satisfied with only regretting me, when he might have obtained my affections and hand I shall soon cease to regret him at all" (ch. 57). The really warm relationship in the novel is that between Elizabeth and her father, Mr. Bennet; Elizabeth is his favorite daughter (ch. 1) and they are able to share in private intimate jokes from which even the rest of the family are excluded; they are so attached that, when Elizabeth plans to go away for a short visit "The only pain was in leaving her father, who would certainly miss her, and who, when it came to the point, so little liked her going, that he told her to write to him, and almost promised to answer her letter" (ch. 27). And one of the chief consolations of her marriage with Darcy was that Mr. Bennet "delighted in going to Pemberley, especially when he was least expected" (ch. 61).

If these various features had occurred in only one novel they could be set down to inventiveness; their fourfold repetition shows that they were overwhelmingly important, at any rate for the author. This central myth—the girl who hates and despises her mother and marries a father-surrogate—is not the exclusive in-

vention of Miss Austen; though, until she wrote, the sexes had been reversed and the subject considered fitter for tragedy than comedy. The most famous example is Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*. For psychoanalysts, there will be little cause for surprise at the ease with which most of her readers so passionately identify with her heroines.

I have seen it suggested somewhere that Bernard Shaw owes much of his success to the fact that he refuses to take love seriously, and Mr. Maugham has written that "the English are not a sexual nation, and you cannot easily persuade them that a man will sacrifice anything important for love." If these diagnoses are true, there is an added reason for Miss Austen's popularity. There has probably never been a more ferocious debunker of passionate or sexual love than Jane Austen in the four central novels. The Charming but Worthless lovers in the four central novels have already been listed; the same stereotype occurs in *Northanger Abbey* (Captain Tilney: Mrs. Allen is a Silly Mother in the same book) and in *Persuasion* (W. W. Elliot). In four of the books the heroine is attracted momentarily by this stereotype, while in two (*Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*) she resists their insidious (sexual) charm; but in all sexual love is portrayed as a snare and a sham, leading only to guilt, misery, and cooled affections.

Persuasion, the last of the novels to be written, is in remarkable contrast to the other four. The central figures of the myth are still present, but their roles are considerably modified. There are two "mothers," one dead before the story opens but stated to have every good quality (Emma's mother was completely characterless); and although the other "mother," Lady Russell, is, as usual, the chief cause of the heroine's unhappiness, the author treats her far more leniently than she had done before, even suggesting that there may be some excuses for her behavior. There are two Charming lovers, one, W. W. Elliot, the Worthless stereotype of the earlier novels; but though the heroine, Anne, had, ten years before the story opened, dismissed the other lover, Captain Wentworth, in exactly the same way as all Jane Austen's heroines dismiss all their Charming lovers, the sentiments he had excited had not disappeared with his dismissal; she still loves him and

at the end of the book marries him. But it is the treatment of the father which is the most revolutionary; Sir Walter Elliot, alone of the fathers in the six novels, is portrayed unmercifully as a vain, proud, stupid and endlessly selfish man; it is the most bitterly drawn character in all the novels, untempered by affection or sympathetic amusement. Not even the numerous "mothers" are treated with such active dislike.

Coming after the obsessive portrayal of the "father-daughter" relationships in the other novels, this sudden reversal is the more surprising. Indeed, it seems to suggest the possibility of a deeply personal motivation. Although it is impossible to know the childhood history of Jane Austen or to do more than guess at what her character was, I suggest that in her youth, probably 1797 or 1798, just before writing *Sense and Sensibility*, Jane Austen did in fact refuse a Charming lover; this may have been at the persuasion of her father or because she could not support the idea of leaving him alone, and could not break the bond which bound them so closely to one another. Through the intervening years she wrote and rewrote her personal dilemma proving to herself that all had been for the best, even though meanwhile father had died, leaving her alone with her mother (and the novels show her belief was that the only good mothers were dead mothers).

We know very little about the personal motives which impel writers of imaginative works to develop their fictions; but I should like to suggest that, at least in Jane Austen's case, the central fantasy corresponds very closely to the manifest content of a dream; and I should further like to suggest that the elaboration of the fantasy into a novel corresponds in some way to the analytic interpretation of a dream and the working through of the dilemma that the dream represents. In this connection it is necessary to stress the fact that the five major novels, in the form in which we have them, were written in as many years, and apparently one immediately after the other; considering the short time taken in writing, the output is enormous. *Northanger Abbey* seems never to have been revised. If we take the central plots of these five novels as dreams, we can clearly trace the gradual working out and alteration of Jane Austen's attitudes toward the members

of her family constellation. It is necessary to remember that her father was a clergyman, her favorite brother a sailor, and her sister Cassandra her greatest confidante and friend.

In *Sense and Sensibility* the identification between the sisters is so complete that they seem like the split facets of a single personality. They are completely devoted to one another. One of these sisters, Marianne, marries an elderly man, after having first been attracted by a Worthless lover; the other, Elinor, has always loved, and finally marries a clergyman. The sisters' mother is silly and well-meaning, and increases her daughters' unhappiness; the clergyman's mother does everything to thwart her son. The girls' father is dead.

In *Pride and Prejudice* the love between the heroine and one sister, Jane, is extremely strong; but there are three other sisters who are despised. The heroine finally makes up her mind to marry a rich and desirable young man, by which means she gets away from her hated mother and silly sisters and has her father from time to time to herself. She rejects a silly clergyman, and also a Worthless lover. Her mother and sisters are the cause of her misery. Her father is the most beloved person in the book.

In *Mansfield Park* the heroine has no sisters whom she loves. She has two sister substitutes, whom she hates, and a real sister whom she meets late in life and likes temperately. She immediately loves and eventually marries a clergyman, considerably older than herself, who stands midway between the role of father and brother. She has a brother, a sailor, to whom she is very attached. She has three silly and spiteful mothers. She rejects a Worthless lover. Apart from the father-brother, there are two other fathers, one of whom is unsympathetic and the other coarse.

In *Emma* the heroine has one sister, whom she looks down on as foolish and overdomesticated. She marries an elderly man who had always stood in the role of a father. She rejects a silly clergyman and a Worthless lover. Her characterless mother is dead, and the mother-substitute is kind and foolish. Besides the man she marries, there is another father, senile, hypochondriacal, and gently selfish.

In *Persuasion* the heroine has two sisters whom she hates, and

who exploit and neglect her. She has always loved and finally marries a sailor, a man of her own age, though, under the persuasion of a mother-substitute, she had once rejected him. She rejects a Worthless lover. The clergyman is married to a tepidly liked sister-substitute. Her ideal mother is dead, the mother-substitute is well-meaning but foolish and inadvertently causes the heroine great distress. The father is hated, proud, silly and endlessly selfish.

It seems as though, by thus reworking her fantasies, Jane Austen had finally uncovered for herself the hidden motives behind the too warm, too loving, family relationships which circumscribed her life. Using symbols, she analyzed her own problems; *Persuasion* was her final solution. In this book she cried out against her starved life, and the selfishness of the father and sisters on whose account it had been starved. When she wrote this book she was nearly at the end of her life, lonely, middle-aged, and nearing the menopause. She could now only voice her regret, her despair. It is this note which makes *Persuasion*, with its poignant and sustained emotion, so completely different to her earlier and more exuberant novels. In the midst of her satirical observation Jane Austen had hidden a myth which corresponded to a facet of universal apprehension, a hidden myth which probably holds good for her myriad admirers; but in her last novel she rejected her myth, her fantasy, because she had learned that, like all myths, it was eventually an enemy of life.

SIMON O. LESSER

The Image of the Father

A Reading of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux"
and "I Want to Know Why"

THE SCENE OF Hawthorne's story "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is a New England colony; the time, like the place not too precisely fixed, a "moonlight" night during that period before the Revolution when Great Britain "had assumed the right of appointing the colonial governors."

A young boy of eighteen, named Robin, has come to town to seek his relative, Major Molineux. The Major is either governor of the colony or a subordinate of high rank—just which is not made clear. The boy has good reasons for wanting to find him. He is the second son of a poor clergyman. His elder brother is destined to inherit the farm "which his father cultivated in the interval of sacred duties." The Major is not only rich and influential but childless, and, during a visit paid his cousin the clergyman a year or two before the story opens, has shown an interest in Robin and his brother and hinted he would be happy to establish one of them in life. Robin has been selected for the honor, handsomely fitted

out in homespun, and, to cover the expenses of his journey, given half the remnant of his father's salary of the year before.

Just before reaching the town Robin has had to cross a river, and it occurs to him that he should have perhaps asked the ferryman to direct him to the home of his kinsman or perhaps even accompany him as a guide. But he reflects that the first person he meets will serve as well. To his surprise, however, he experiences rebuff after rebuff, difficulty upon difficulty. He asks an elderly gentleman to direct him, but the man not only disclaims any knowledge of the Major; he rebukes Robin so angrily—the youth has impulsively gripped the old man's coat—that some people nearby roar with laughter. Robin now wanders through a maze of deserted streets near the waterfront. Coming to a still-open tavern, he decides to make inquiry there. He is at first cordially received, but as soon as he asks to be directed to his relative, the innkeeper begins to read the description of an escaped "bounden servant," looking at Robin in such a way as to suggest that the description fits him exactly. Robin leaves, derisive laughter ringing in his ears for the second time that night.

Now the youth loiters up and down a spacious street, looking at each man who passes by in the hope of finding the Major. He is now so tired and hungry that he begins to consider the wisdom of lifting his cudgel and compelling the first passer-by he meets to direct him to his kinsman. While toying with this idea, he turns down an empty and rather disreputable street. Through the half-open door of the third house he passes he catches a glimpse of a lady wearing a scarlet petticoat and decides to address his inquiry to her. His appearance and voice are winning, and the lady steps outside to talk to him. She proves both attractive and hospitable. Intimating that she is the housekeeper of the Major, who she says is asleep, she offers to welcome the youth in his stead. Though Robin only half believes her, he is about to follow her when she is startled by the opening of a door in a nearby house and leaves him to run into her own.

A watchman now approaches, muttering sleepy threats. They are perfunctory, but sufficient to discourage Robin temporarily from inquiring for his kinsman. He shouts an inquiry just as the

watchman is about to vanish around a corner, but receives no reply. Robin thinks he hears a sound of muffled laughter. He quite clearly hears a pleasant titter from an open window above his head, whence a round arm beckons him. Being a clergyman's son and a good youth, Robin flees.

He now roams through the town "desperately, and at random, . . . almost ready to believe that a spell was on him."

Encountering a solitary passer-by in the shadow of a church steeple, Robin insists on being directed to the home of his kinsman. The passer-by unmuffles his face. He proves to be a man Robin had noticed earlier at the tavern, but now half of his face has been painted a livid red, the other half black. Grinning at the surprised youth, the man tells him that his kinsman will pass that very spot within the hour. Robin settles down on the church steps to wait. As he struggles against drowsiness, strange and extraordinarily vivid fantasies flit through his mind. He dozes but, hearing a man pass by, wakes and inquires, with unwarranted peevishness, if he must wait there all night for his kinsman, Major Molineux. The stranger approaches and, seeing a country youth who is apparently homeless and without friends, offers to be of help. After hearing Robin's story he joins him to wait the arrival of the Major.

Shortly a mighty stream of people come into view. Robin gradually makes out that some of them are applauding spectators, some participants in a curious procession. It is headed by a single horseman, who bears a drawn sword and whose face is painted red and black: he is the man who has told Robin that his kinsman would pass that way within the hour. Behind the horseman come a band of wind instruments, men carrying torches, and then men in Indian and many other kinds of costume.

Robin has a feeling that he is involved in this procession, a feeling which is quickly confirmed. As the torches approach him, the leader thunders a command, the parade stops, the tumult dies down.

Right before Robin's eye was an uncovered cart. There the torches blazed the brightest, there the moon shone out like day, and there, in tar-and-feathery dignity, sat his kinsman, Major Molineux!

The Major is a large and majestic man, but now his body is "agitated by a quick and continual tremor" he cannot quell. The encounter with Robin causes him to suffer still more deeply. He recognizes the youth on the instant.

Staring at his kinsman, Robin's knees shake and his hair bristles. Soon, however, a curious change sets in. The adventures of the night, his fatigue, the confusion of the spectacle, above all "the spectre of his kinsman reviled by that great multitude . . . [affect] him with a sort of mental inebriety." In the crowd he sees the watchman he has encountered earlier, enjoying his amazement. A woman twitches his arm: it is the minx of the scarlet petticoat. Finally, from the balcony of the large house across from the church comes a great, broad laugh which momentarily dominates everything: it is the formidable old man of whom Robin made his first inquiries and whom he later went out of his way to avoid.

Then Robin seemed to hear the voices of . . . all who had made sport of him that night. The contagion was spreading among the multitude, when all at once, it seized upon Robin, and he sent forth a shout of laughter that echoed through the street,—every man shook his sides, every man emptied his lungs, but Robin's shout was the loudest there.

When the laughter has momentarily spent its force, the procession is resumed. Robin asks the gentleman who has been sitting beside him to direct him to the ferry. The Major, the boy realizes, will scarcely desire to see his face again. In the friendliest possible way the gentleman refuses Robin's request. He tells the youth that he will speed him on his journey in a few days if he still wants to leave. But he suggests another possibility. "' . . . if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux.' "

2

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux" belongs, I believe, among Hawthorne's half-dozen greatest short stories. But unexpected difficulties arise when one attempts to account for the spell the story

casts. Although it seems clear enough as it is read, it resists analysis. Above all, its climax is puzzling. "Mental inebriety" is hardly an adequate explanation for a youth's barefaced mockery of an elderly relative for whom he had been searching, whose ill-treatment might have been expected to inspire feelings of compassion and anger.

Of the half-dozen critics who have discussed the story, surprisingly, no more than two seem aware that it presents any difficulties. The rest accept Hawthorne's explanation at face value. They regard "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" as the story of an ignorant country youth who, happening to wander upon the scene at an inopportune time, is first frustrated in his search as a result of the preparation the colonists are making and then becomes a reluctant and confused spectator at their humiliation of his kinsman. Such an interpretation not only fails to explain many aspects of the story; it hardly suggests why the story should interest us. It is perhaps significant that the critics who recognize that the story is by no means so one-dimensional as this, Malcolm Cowley and Q. D. Leavis, also show the keenest awareness of its greatness. Unfortunately even these critics have not succeeded, in my opinion, in penetrating to the story's richest veins of meaning.

Malcolm Cowley describes the story as "the legend of a youth who achieves manhood through searching for a spiritual father and finding that the object of his search is an imposter" (Introduction to *The Portable Hawthorne*). Leaving to one side the question of whether Robin is searching for a spiritual father, it may be said at once that there is no evidence that Major Molineux is an imposter. The first paragraph of the story tells us that the colonial servants appointed by Great Britain were likely to be resented even when they carried out instructions with some lenience; and we are later told that the Major's head had "grown gray in honor."

Mrs. Leavis regards "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" as a "prophetic forecast of . . . the rejection of England that was to occur in fact much later" ("Hawthorne as Poet," *Sewanee Review*, Spring 1951). This is by no means as far-fetched a reading of the story as it may at first appear. It has the merit of calling attention to a rebelliousness in Robin for which, as we shall see, there is a great

deal of evidence. But as I think will become clear, Mrs. Leavis has perceived a secondary implication of that rebelliousness; it has a much more intimate source and reference.

The remaining critics who have commented on "Major Molineux" have evidently based their remarks almost entirely on their conscious reactions to the story's manifest level of meaning. At best, I believe, such criticism is of limited value; in connection with such a work as this it is sometimes actually misleading. Like some other stories by Hawthorne and by such writers as Melville, Kafka, Dostoevsky and Shakespeare, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is Janus-faced. It says one thing to the conscious mind and whispers something quite different to the unconscious. The second level of meaning is *understood* readily enough, immediately and intuitively. Our acceptance of Robin's behavior—which, as we shall see, is bizarre not only during his ultimate encounter with his kinsman but throughout the story—is only explicable, I believe, on the assumption that we understand it without difficulty. To respond to the story, to find Robin's behavior not only "right" but satisfying, we must perceive a great many things nowhere explicitly developed. These hidden implications are not meant to come to our attention as we read; they would arouse anxiety if they did. Even to get at them after one has read the story requires a deliberate exertion of will. There is still another difficulty. To deal with these implications at all systematically, one is almost compelled to make some use of depth psychology. This is a kind of knowledge most critics are curiously loathe to employ.

As soon as we look at "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" more closely, we discover that it is only in part a story of baffled search: Robin is never so intent on finding his illustrious relative as he believes he is and as it appears. The story even tells us why this is so. To some extent we understand from the very beginning; the explanations offered serve basically to remind us of things we have experienced ourselves.

As Robin walks into the town, it will be remembered, he realizes that he should have probably asked the ferryman how to get to the home of Major Molineux. Today we have scientific evidence

for what Hawthorne, and we, understand intuitively, the significance of such forgetting. Earlier in the same paragraph we have been told something equally significant. Robin walks into the town "with as light a step as if his day's journey had not already exceeded thirty miles, and with as eager an eye as if he were entering London city, instead of the little metropolis of a New England colony." This though he has momentarily lost sight of the reason for his visit! As early as this we begin to suspect that the town attracts the youth for reasons which have nothing whatever to do with finding his influential relative. The intimation does not surprise us. Robin is eighteen. The ferryman has surmised that this is his first visit to town. In a general way we understand why his eye is "eager."

Robin makes his first inquiry for his kinsman with reasonable alacrity. But a considerable time appears to elapse before his second inquiry, at the tavern, and he is evidently spurred to enter it as much by the odor of food, which reminds him of his own hunger, as by any zeal to find the Major.

After his rebuff at the tavern it perhaps seems reasonable enough that Robin should drop his inquiries and simply walk through the streets looking for Major Molineux. If our critical faculties were not already somewhat relaxed, however, it might occur to us at once that this is a singularly inefficient way of looking for anyone. And Robin does not pursue his impractical plan with any ardor. He stares at the young men he encounters with as much interest as at the old ones; though he notices the jaunty gait of others, he never increases his pace; and there are many pauses "to examine the gorgeous display of goods in the shop windows."

Nor does his lack of success make him impatient. Only the approach of the elderly gentleman he had first accosted causes him to abandon his plan and turn down a side street. He is now so tired and hungry that he *considers* demanding guidance from the first solitary passer-by he encounters. But while this resolution is, as Hawthorne puts it, "gaining strength," what he actually does is enter "a street of mean appearance, on either side of which a row of ill-built houses was straggling toward the harbor." It is of the utmost importance that Robin continues his "researches" on this

less respectable street, although no one is visible along its entire extent. If we were not by now so completely immersed in the concealed story which is unfolding itself, we might begin to wonder consciously whether Robin is seriously searching for his kinsman.

The encounters with women which follow explain the attraction of the street. They show that unconsciously Robin is searching for sexual adventure. The strength of his desire is almost pathetically betrayed by his half-willingness to believe the cock-and-bull story of the pretty young "housekeeper." Here, if not before, we identify one of the specific forces which is inhibiting Robin in his search for his kinsman: he would like a greater measure of sexual freedom than it is reasonable to suppose he would enjoy in the home of a colonial official.

The encounter with the watchman furnishes additional evidence of Robin's ambivalence. The youth could scarcely hope to find a better person of whom to ask directions. It is likely that he is also held back in this case by guilt about what he has just been doing, but the ease with which he has permitted himself to be diverted from his search is probably one of the sources of that guilt.

After further wandering Robin finally detains the passer-by who tells him that the Major will pass that very spot within the hour. In talking with the kindly gentleman who joins him to await the arrival of the Major, Robin is unable to restrain himself from boasting of his shrewdness and grown-upness. These boasts help us to understand another of the forces which has been holding him back: he wants to succeed through his own efforts and his own merit. His departure from home has evidently caused him to dream of achieving economic as well as sexual independence. When at the end of the story the gentleman suggests that Robin may decide to stay in town and may prosper without the help of his kinsman, he is simply giving expression to the youth's unvoiced but readily discernible desire.

The gentleman has an opportunity to observe how half-hearted Robin is about finding his kinsman. When the sounds of the approaching procession become more clearly audible, the youth comes to the conclusion that some kind of "prodigious merry-making" is going forward and suggests that he and his new-found

friend step around the corner, to a point where he thinks everyone is hastening, and partake of their share of the fun. He has to be reminded by his companion that he is searching for his kinsman, who is supposed to pass by the place where they now are in a very short time. With insight and artistry Hawthorne spreads the evidence of Robin's irresoluteness of purpose from the very beginning of the story to the moment of Major Molineux's appearance; but so subtle is the evidence, so smoothly does it fit into the surface flow of the narrative, that its significance never obtrudes itself on our attention.

By this point in the story, furthermore, we unconsciously understand Robin's vacillation more completely than I have been able to suggest. We see that, unbeknown to himself, the youth has good reasons for *not* wanting to find Major Molineux: when he finds him, he will have to resubmit to the kind of authority from which, temporarily at least, he has just escaped. At some deep level the Major appears anything but a potential benefactor; he symbolizes just those aspects of the father from which the youth so urgently desires to be free. As an elderly relative of the father and an authority figure, he may be confused with the father. In any case, however undeservedly, he has now become the target of all the hostile and rebellious feelings which were originally directed against the father.

Hawthorne tells us these things, it is interesting to note, by means of just the kind of unconscious manifestations which twentieth-century psychology has found so significant. While Robin sits on the steps of the church, fighting his desire to sleep, he has a fantasy in which he imagines that his kinsman is already dead! And his very next thought is of his father's household. He wonders how "that evening of ambiguity and weariness" has been spent at home, and has a second fantasy of such hallucinatory vividness that he wonders if he is "here or there." Nor is this an idle question. His father and Major Molineux are so inextricably linked in his mind that in a sense the drama in which he is involved is being played out "there"—at home—as well as in the town where bodily he happens to be.

The climax of this drama, so puzzling to the conscious intellect,

is immediately comprehensible to that portion of the mind which has been following the hidden course of developments. It is comprehensible although Hawthorne describes Robin's feelings, as is right, in vague terms. Robin never understands those feelings and the reader would find it disturbing if they were too plainly labeled.

The feelings would probably never have secured open expression except under circumstances as out of the ordinary as those the story describes. But now everything conspires not simply to permit but to encourage Robin to give in to tendencies which as we know he was finding it difficult to control. To everyone present Major Molineux is overtly what he is to the youth on some dark and secret level—a symbol of restraint and unwelcome authority. He is this even to the elderly gentleman, the watchman, the man by his side—people whose disapproval of the crowd's behavior might have had a powerful effect upon him. Without a voice being raised in protest, the crowd is acting out the youth's repressed impulses and in effect urging him to act on them also. The joy the crowd takes in asserting its strength and the reappearance of the lady of the scarlet petticoat provide him with incentives for letting himself go.

And so Robin makes common cause with the crowd. He laughs—he laughs louder than anyone else. So long as he himself did not know how he would act he had reason to fear the crowd, and the relief he feels at the easing of the immediate situation is one of the sources of his laughter. But his decision resolves still deeper and more vexing conflicts. The relief he feels that he can vent his hostility for his kinsman and abandon his search for him is the ultimate source of his "riotous mirth." It is fueled by energy which until then was being expended in repression and inner conflict.

Although Hawthorne uses figurative language which may keep his meaning from being consciously noted, he is at pains to let us know that murderous hate underlies the merriment of the crowd of which Robin becomes a part. When the laughter momentarily dies down, the procession resumes its march.

On they went, like fiends that throng in mockery around some dead potentate, mighty no more, but majestic still in his agony.

On they went, in counterfeited pomp, in senseless uproar, in frenzied merriment, trampling all on an old man's heart.

Symbolically and to some extent actually the crowd has carried out the fantasy Robin had on the steps of the church.

To the conscious mind "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is a story of an ambitious youth's thwarted search for an influential relative he wants to find. To the unconscious, it is a story of the youth's hostile and rebellious feelings for the relative—and for the father—and his wish to be free of adult domination. To the conscious mind it is a story of a search which was unsuccessful because of external difficulties. To the unconscious—like *Hamlet*, with which it has more than one point in common—it is a story of a young man caught up in an enterprise for which he has no stomach and debarred from succeeding in it by internal inhibitions.

From one point of view the unacknowledged forces playing upon the apparently simple and candid central character of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" are deeply abhorrent. Our sympathy for the character should tell us, however, that there is another side to the matter. The tendencies which assert themselves in Robin exist in all men. What he is doing, unwittingly but flamboyantly, is something which every young man does and must do, however gradually, prudently and inconspicuously: he is destroying an image of paternal authority so that, freed from its restraining influence, he can begin life as an adult.

3

"My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is one of a relatively small but distinguished group of stories which would be incomprehensible, in part or in their entirety, on the basis of what we understand consciously. In response to such stories it is evident that unconscious perception plays an indispensable role. Though it is less evident, I believe that the unconscious plays a role which is scarcely less important in response to many stories which are intelligible on some level to the conscious mind. For most, if not all fiction—and certainly the greatest fiction—has *additional* levels of meaning

which must be communicated unconsciously. In many cases far more is communicated unconsciously than consciously. Even when this is not the case, the meanings grasped below the threshold of awareness may make a disproportionate contribution to the pleasure we receive from reading fiction.

It may be worth-while to analyze a story which is perfectly comprehensible to the intellect but has many further levels of meaning. Let us glance, therefore, at Sherwood Anderson's story, "I Want to Know Why." It has many interesting points of similarity and contrast with "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." And as it happens, the story has been analyzed by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, so that once again we have a jumping-off point for our own explorations.

I shall assume that my readers are familiar with the story, and simply remind them of its chief events. It is narrated in the first person by its fifteen-year-old hero, whose name we never learn. A boy from Beckersville, Kentucky, a small town evidently in the blue-grass region, he is "crazy about thoroughbred horses"; to him they epitomize everything which is "lovely and clean and full of spunk and honest." A lump comes into his throat when he sees potential winners run. He knows he could capitalize on this physical reaction if he wanted to, but he has no desire to gamble; horses and racing represent something too important to him for that.

With three friends of about his own age, the boy runs away to attend the races at Saratoga. Bildad, a Negro from the same town who works at the tracks, feeds the boys, shows them a place to sleep and keeps still about them, which the hero seems to appreciate most of all.

The race the boys particularly want to see has two entries that give the hero a lump in his throat, and the night before it is run he is so excited he cannot sleep. He aches to watch the two horses run, but he dreads it too, for he hates to see either one beaten. The day of the race he goes to the paddocks to look at the horses. As soon as he sees one of them, Sunstreak, a nervous and beautiful stallion, who is "like a girl you think about sometimes but never see," the boy knows that it is his day. Watching, he experiences a mystical communion with the horse and the horse's trainer, a man

named Jerry Tillford, also from Beckersville, who has befriended him many times. The experience is so central to understanding the story that it must be quoted at considerable length.

I was standing looking at that horse and aching. In some way, I can't tell how, I knew just how Sunstreak felt inside. . . . That horse wasn't thinking about running. . . . He was just thinking about holding himself back 'til the time for the running came. . . . He wasn't bragging or letting on much or prancing or making a fuss, but just waiting. I knew it and Jerry Tillford his trainer knew. I looked up and then that man and I looked into each other's eyes. Something happened to me. I guess I loved the man as much as I did the horse because he knew what I knew. Seemed to me there wasn't anything in the world but that man and the horse and me. I cried and Jerry Tillford had a shine in his eyes. . . .

Sunstreak does win the race and the other Beckersville entry, a gelding named Middlestride, finishes second. The hero of the story was so confident that it would work out this way that he is scarcely excited. All through the race he thinks about Jerry Tillford and of how happy he must be. "I liked him that afternoon even more than I ever liked my own father." Jerry, he knows, has worked with Sunstreak since the horse was a baby colt, and he imagines that while watching the race the trainer must feel "like a mother seeing her child do something brave or wonderful."

That night the boy "cuts out" from his companions because he feels an impulse to be near Jerry. He walks along a road which leads to a "rummy-looking farmhouse" because he has seen "Jerry and some other men go that way in an automobile." He doesn't expect to find them, but shortly after he gets there an automobile arrives with Jerry and five other men, several of them from Beckersville and known to the boy. All of them except the father of one of the boys who has accompanied the hero to Saratoga, a gambler named Rieback who quarrels with the others, enter the farmhouse, which proves to be "a place for bad women to stay in."

The boy telling the story creeps to a window and peers in. What he sees sickens and disgusts him. The women are mean-looking and, except for one who a little resembles the gelding Middlestride, "but [is] not clean like him" and has "a hard ugly mouth," they

are not even attractive. The place smells rotten, and the talk is rotten, "the kind a kid hears around a livery stable in a town like Beckersville in the winter but don't ever expect to hear talked when there are women around."

Jerry Tillford boasts like a fool, taking credit for Sunstreak's qualities and the victory the horse has won that afternoon. Then the trainer looks at the woman who somewhat resembles Middlestride and his eyes begin to shine as they had when he had looked at the teller of the story and Sunstreak that afternoon. As the man weaves toward the woman, the boy begins to hate him. "I wanted to scream and rush in the room and kill him . . . I was so mad . . . that I cried and my fists were doubled up so my fingernails cut my hands." When the man kisses the woman, the boy creeps away and returns to the tracks. That night he sleeps little. He tells his companions nothing of what he has seen, but the next morning he persuades them to start for home.

There he continues to live very much as before, but everything seems different.

At the tracks the air don't taste as good or smell as good. It's because a man like Jerry Tillford, who knows what he does, could see a horse like Sunstreak run, and kiss a woman like that the same day. . . . I keep thinking about it and it spoils looking at horses and smelling things and hearing niggers laugh and everything. Sometimes I'm so mad about it I want to fight someone. . . . What did he do it for? I want to know why.

4

"I Want to Know Why" certainly means something to the conscious intellect, and in *Understanding Fiction* Brooks and Warren give one interpretation of the story's manifest content to which I should not wish to offer more than one or two reservations. "I Want to Know Why," they declare, is an initiation story in which a boy "discovers something about the nature of evil, and tries to find some way of coming to terms with his discovery."

The boy knows that evil exists in the world. According to Brooks

and Warren, what causes him to feel so much horror and disgust at Saratoga is the realization—pointed up by the parallelism of the scene at the paddocks and the scene at the rummy-looking farmhouse—that good and evil may be so closely linked, that they may co-exist in the same person. He discovers too that virtue is a human, not an animal, quality. Unlike the horse, with which in other respects human beings are frequently compared, man has the capacity for choice. When he elects the bad, he is worse than the beasts.

It seems to me that the phrase “who knows what he does,” on which Brooks and Warren base the last-mentioned observation, refers less to specific problems involving choice than to the willingness of a creature like man to come to terms with his predilection for evil. Nor can I assent to the claim that the boy *discovers*, at the climax of the story, that good and evil are closely joined. What he knows about Henry Rieback’s father has already taught him that, if nothing else has. These are trifling qualifications, however. My real question is whether the interpretation offered by Brooks and Warren goes far to explain the impact of the story, even assuming the correctness of everything they say. They themselves seem a little uneasy on this score, for they write:

. . . having extracted what may seem to be a moral “message,” one should remind oneself that the “message” is, as such, not the story. The story may be said to be the dramatization of the discovery. Now the message is something of which everyone is aware; it is a platitude. But the platitude ceases to be a platitude, it is revitalized and becomes meaningful again, when it is shown to be operating in terms of experience.

Here, again, there is little to which one can take exception. A very ordinary idea or event can be “revitalized” if dramatized successfully, and the fact that what we learn about Jerry Tillford is dramatized helps to account for its impact upon the boy at the farmhouse window and the reader looking over his shoulder. Even when dramatized, however, the knowledge that an adult is capable of good and evil is unlikely to have the powerful effect it has upon narrator and reader unless it has some special significance. Something about the nature of the narrator’s relationship and experi-

ence with Jerry Tillford has eluded Brooks' and Warren's analysis. It has eluded it, I believe, in part because they are so preoccupied with the moral values of the story that they have not asked the most important questions which must be answered if we are to account for the story's appeal.

A central question, as I have indicated, is why the climactic scene can arouse such pain, disgust and bitter disillusionment in the boy who tells the story. His discovery of the underside of Jerry Tillford evidently frustrates some yearning he can scarcely bear to renounce. Once we have gone this far, it is not too difficult to identify this yearning: it is for an ideal relationship with a man who is like his father but better than his father—less fallible, more sympathetic with the boy's interests and, what is at first glance a curious requirement, devoid of sexuality. His disappointment is the keener because, on the very afternoon of the experience at the farmhouse, the consummation of his desire seemed within reach—for an ecstatic moment had actually been achieved.

That the unnamed narrator of "I Want to Know Why" wanted to adopt Jerry Tillford as a kind of second father could not be more clear. Indeed, it could be maintained that the boy's feelings are sometimes too baldly revealed. They could be inferred from the few things he says about his father and various incidental remarks about the trainer. His father is "all right," and evidently extremely permissive but he doesn't make much money and so can't buy his son things. The boy says he doesn't care—he's too old for that—but since he has just listed the kind of presents Henry Rieback is always getting from his father we doubt his statement. At a deeper level, we sense, the boy is disappointed because his father does not satisfy an immaterial need: he evidently does not share his son's interest in thoroughbreds and racing. Jerry Tillford, of course, is not only interested in these subjects but an authority upon them, and his job puts him in a position to befriend the boy in terms of his interests. He has let the boy walk right into the stalls to examine horses, and so on. These favors may have made the boy think of Jerry Tillford as a kind of father. In any case, the language the boy uses to describe the trainer's treatment of Sunstreak shows that he attributes parental kindness

to him. ("I knew he had been watching and working with Sunstreak since the horse was a baby colt . . . I knew that for him it was like a mother seeing her child do something brave or wonderful.")

The various hints given us about the narrator's feelings for Jerry Tillford are confirmed by two explicit statements. The boy declares, it will be remembered, that on the afternoon of the race he liked the trainer even more than he ever liked his own father. He is equally frank about the feelings which prompted him to "ditch" his companions the night of the race in order to be near the trainer. "I was just lonesome to see Jerry, like wanting to see your father at night when you are a young kid."

What may require further explanation—although unconsciously we understand it very well—is why the boy's feelings are of such extraordinary strength and take the particular form they do. In part his hero worship of Jerry Tillford is a not uncommon outcome of an interrelated cluster of reactions to the parents which arise in children of both sexes during latency and early adolescence. The fuller knowledge of reality children acquire at this stage of their development and the resentment they feel for rebuffs, imaginary or real, may cause them to become acutely aware of their parents' circumstances and limitations. Though they continue to love their parents, consciously or unconsciously they are likely to feel dissatisfied with them or even ashamed of them. Frequently these feelings cause children to replace their parents in fantasy—to imagine that their actual parents are mere pretenders to that honor and that their "real" parents are personages who are powerful, famous or wealthy, or the possessors of some other desired attribute. The children's disaffection may also impel them to establish relationships with adults who can easily be recognized as idealized replacements of one or the other parent.

In boys these feelings are powerfully reinforced by the changes which occur at puberty. The sudden upsurge of sexuality may reactivate the long-dormant Oedipus tendencies, jeopardizing and in some cases at least temporarily upsetting the still far from stable identification with the father. The wish to protect this identification against the reawakened competitiveness which threatens it is re-

sponsible for a curious secondary development—an attempt to deny the sexuality of the father and, by an inevitable chain of association, of the mother also. Misguided as such an attempt may appear, it has its own logic. Seen as a sexual being enjoying the favors of the mother, the father again becomes a person who arouses envy, hatred and fear. The knowledge of the sexual relations of the parents is inherently painful and, as Freud has explained, is usually conveyed to the child in a way which tends to belittle both his parents and himself. For this reason, too, the information is usually resisted.

The secret of sexual life is revealed to [the growing boy] in coarse language, undisguisedly derogatory and hostile in intent, and the effect is to destroy the authority of adults, which is irreconcilable with these revelations about their sexual activities. The greatest impression on the child who is being initiated is made by the relation the information bears to his own parents, which is often instantly repudiated in some such words as these: "It may be true that your father and mother and other people do such things, but it is quite impossible that mine do." ("A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men.")

Now we are in a better position to approach the two contrasted scenes which do so much to make "I Want to Know Why" a compelling story. The scene at the paddocks depicts a fervently desired communion with an idealized and desexualized father, a father toward whom one need have no feelings of competitiveness and hostility. Moreover, it recalls just such a situation of innocence—it recalls the pre-Oedipal situation in which the feeling of father and son for the mother was a bond between them instead of the focus of rivalry, and father, mother and child were united in love. In this scene Sunstreak becomes the mother, and the boy and Jerry Tillford are brought together by their admiration and love for the stallion. (Sunstreak reminds the boy, it will be recalled, of "a girl you think about sometimes but never see.")

The scene at the rummy-looking farmhouse undoes the scene at the paddocks. Jerry's bragging, which is at the expense of Sunstreak, reveals that he has no real love for the stallion, and thus shows the boy that there was actually no foundation for the ex-

perience he thought he had had that afternoon. Because the boy identifies with the stallion, the trainer's boasts are also a blow to his self-esteem. Finally, the boasts show how unfit the trainer is to be the kind of parent the boy had desired.

The disclosure of Jerry's sexuality wounds the boy still more deeply. Even more than his bragging, it disqualifies the trainer for the kind of relationship the boy had desired—a relationship which would be washed of all competitiveness and enmity. It is the source of a more encompassing disillusionment. It forces on the boy the unwelcome knowledge that this is a sexual, sinful world, in which he can nowhere hope to find the kind of communion he has sought or the perfection he once attributed to the parents and later hoped to find incarnated in others. The trainer's behavior, his very presence at the whorehouse, is also a particularly brutal and painful reminder of the sexuality of the parents—not only of the father, with whom Tillford is immediately associated, but of the mother as well. She is present in this scene also. She is the woman the trainer desires, the one, somewhat more attractive than the others, who resembles the gelding Middlestride. She is debased to a prostitute, a devaluation which almost always suggests itself—though of course it may be instantly repudiated—when an adolescent boy is compelled to take cognizance of the sexual relations of the parents. Freud describes the chain of reasoning in the same essay from which I have just quoted:

Along with this piece of "sexual enlightenment" there seldom fails to go, as a corollary, a further one about the existence of certain women who practice sexual intercourse as a means of livelihood and are universally despised in consequence. To the boy himself this contempt is necessarily quite foreign; as soon as he realizes that he too can be initiated by these unfortunates into that sexual life which he has hitherto regarded as the exclusive prerogative of "grown-ups," his feeling for them is only a mixture of longing and shuddering. Then, when he cannot any longer maintain the doubt that claims exception for his own parents from the ugly sexual behavior of the rest of the world, he says to himself with cynical logic that the difference between his mother and a whore is after all not so very great, since at bottom they both do the same thing.

On one level Jerry Tillford's behavior is wounding because it punctures an attempt to idealize him, to deny his sexuality and the parents'. On still another level it is wounding because it has the character of a sexual rejection and betrayal. To some extent the boy's feelings are those of an outraged lover. Logically the two sets of reactions are incompatible with one another, but here, as is frequently the case, fiction is speaking to a part of the psyche not concerned with logic, a part which can simultaneously accommodate divergent and even contradictory feelings.

The scene at the farmhouse gains additional poignance by stirring feelings originally experienced at different periods of time. Like the scene at the paddocks, it recalls an earlier situation heavily charged with emotion: it condenses the infantile and the adolescent discoveries of sexuality. On the immediate, realistic level the scene depicts something which befalls a fifteen-year-old boy, but in every essential respect it duplicates the "primal scene," the original investigation of the parents' sexual relations. The looking, the secrecy, the mixture of fascination and horror, the ambivalence about whether one will "find anything," the feeling of being alone and betrayed when one does find what underneath one did expect—all the characteristics of the prototype experience are echoed here.

Although only the unconscious is likely to perceive it, in the last analysis both "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" and "I Want to Know Why" are stories of a boy's relationship with his father. Both describe more or less universal phases of the process of growing up, although, as in great fiction generally, the actual events are so altered that they may not be consciously recognizable, and so telescoped and heightened that they arouse even profounder affects than the less dramatic and more gradual experiences they draw upon and evoke. "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" concentrates on the young man's rebellious and hostile feelings toward an authoritative image of the father—an image which must be destroyed in the course of achieving independent adulthood. "I Want to Know Why" describes the frustration of two dear but unfulfillable wishes of the adolescent boy. The first wish is to deny

the sexuality of the parents in order to avoid competition with the father. This wish is incompatible with what one inevitably learns in growing up and on some deep level already knows. The second wish is for a love relationship with the father which, though idealized in some respects, is still so heavily cathected with libido that its satisfaction would involve both continued dependence upon the father and a proprietary right to his affection.

Although both stories refer ultimately to emotions felt by sons for their fathers, it is interesting that in each case the feelings are displaced onto surrogates. In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" the advantage of the alteration is evident: it facilitates the expression of hostility. "I Want to Know Why" is probably both more realistic and more moving because the immediate object of the hero's feelings is just such a man as Jerry Tillford. By the time a boy is fifteen the feelings of affection for the actual father are usually too admixed with other elements, the disillusionment too advanced, to permit the sharp contrasts of hopes raised and abruptly deflated upon which the structure and impact of the story depend.

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The Stranger

ALBERT CAMUS' *The Stranger*¹ is one of the most prominent post-1939 French novels, and one which has been widely regarded as conveying a new "philosophical" message. This paper is not concerned with the connections between the novel and the philosophical writings of the author (in particular *Le mythe de Sisyphe*, 1942). It attempts to trace relationships between the novel and certain trends in the temper of the age. In doing so, it offers a psychological interpretation of the content of the novel² and confronts this interpretation with those of a sample of American critics.

The outline of the plot is as follows: Meursault, a small French clerk in Algiers, receives news of his mother's death; he attends her funeral; he begins an affair and becomes engaged; he kills, under a blazing sun, without any adequate conscious motivation the brother of an Arab prostitute whose pimp he vaguely knows; he is condemned to death and will presently be executed. He is the narrator.

Three attitudes may be taken toward the hero. First, that he is the incarnation of a metaphysical affirmation which is known to

be held by the author. Thus Justin O'Brien (*New York Herald Tribune*, April 14, 1946) quotes a passage from Camus' *Le mythe de Sisyphe* ("The world that can be explained . . . even with false reasons is a familiar world. But in a universe . . . deprived of illusions and enlightenment, man feels himself a stranger. . . . This divorce between man and his life . . . is . . . the feeling of absurdity"), and says, "Here is the key to the novel. Meursault, the unintentional murderer, enacts a parable of man's fate. Since there is . . . free will, he must have been free to kill or not to kill. But he cannot see it that way; if there was no other coercion, there was that of the dazzling sun."

Second, the hero may be considered unintelligible. Thus Edmund Wilson (*The New Yorker*, April 13, 1946) says about the hero that "as a human being he seems to me incredible; his behavior is never explained or made plausible. . . . The queer state of mind of the protagonist . . . [is] never accounted for."

Critics have tended to take one, or both, of these positions. A third position, which shall be set forth here, is that Meursault's behavior is largely intelligible. . . .

The novel contains only few explicit indications—almost entirely overlooked even by the sophisticated critics—about the hero's past. But these few are quite significant. As to his father, "I never set eyes on him" (p. 138). As to his mother, "For years she'd never had a word to say to me and I could see she was moping with no one to talk to" (p. 58); ". . . neither Mother nor I expected much of one another (*n'attendions plus rien l'un de l'autre*)" (p. 109). "As a student I'd had plenty of ambition. . . . But when I had to drop my studies, I very soon realized all that was pretty futile (*sans importance réelle*)" (p. 52). The child and the adolescent are thus shown as reacting with withdrawal of conscious affect in intrapersonal relations (that is, the relations between the various components of the self) and in interpersonal relations. He is thus reacting to the guilty rage induced by the severe deprivations which were imposed by an absent father, an indifferent mother, and a withholding wider environment.

It is this characteristic defense which the hero perpetuates and elaborates in his adult life, and which gives his personality—con-

veyed in a style appropriate to this dominant trait—its particular aura. I shall now discuss the various major manifestations of the hero's affectlessness.

Firstly, and most obviously, the hero is usually rather clearly aware of the *absence or weakness of affects in response to intra-personal and interpersonal stimuli.*³ "I could truthfully say I'd been quite fond of (*j'aimais bien*) mother—but really that didn't mean much (*cela ne voulait rien dire*)" (p. 80). His affects appear to him as *questionable* rather than as inevitable and valid; "I came to feel that this aversion [against talking about certain things—N.L.] had no real substance (*je n'ai plus trouvé d'importance à ces répugnances*)" (p. 89). He is much aware of the *almost total dependence of his affective on his somatic state* (cf. p. 80)—conforming though in extreme fashion to what is probably a contemporary trend.

While the hero is acutely aware of his atypicality as a "stranger" to the world, he spontaneously subsumes most of his few near-affective experiences in interpersonal relations under general categories. When his lawyer asks him whether he had loved his mother, he replies "yes, like everybody else" (p. 83). When his girl friend asks him "Suppose another girl had asked you to marry her—I mean a girl you liked in the same way as you like me—would you have said 'Yes' to her too?" the hero does not find such a hypothesis inconceivable and his emotions toward Marie unique. He answers, apparently effortlessly: "Naturally" (p. 53). In this, he presumably manifests a widely diffused trend in the quality of Western "love" experiences in this century.

It may be surmised that such "generalizing" procedures are in part a defense against the unconscious threat of overwhelming affect. When the hero learns of his mother's death, he arranges for keeping "the usual vigil" (p. 1) beside the body. The owner of his habitual restaurant affirms "there's no one like a mother" (p. 2) and lends him a black tie and mourning band procured for the occasion of an uncle's death.

The hero shows a *high degree of detachment toward decisive impacts of his environment on him.* During most of his trial he feels as if somebody else is about to be condemned to death. ". . . He

["one of my policemen"—N.L.] asked me if I was feeling nervous. I said: No, and that the prospect of witnessing a trial rather interested me" (p. 103). When danger mounts, "*the futility of what was happening (tout ce que je faisais d'inutile en ce lieu)* seemed to take me by the throat" (p. 132).

All value judgments have ceased to be self-evident, as they have in some variants of contemporary empiricist epistemology. There is a *tabula rasa* where the traditional ethical postulates stood. But the hero attains at the end a state of exaltation in contemplating the *certain facts of his present aliveness and impending annihilation*: "It might look as if my hands were empty. Actually, I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he [the prison chaplain—N.L.]: sure of my present life and of the death that was coming. That, no doubt, was all I had; but at least that certainty was something I could get my teeth into—just as it had got its teeth into me (*je tenais cette vérité autant qu'elle me tenait*)" (p. 151). The cathexis withdrawn from norms is in part displaced to very general aspects of facts.

Choices made, then, appear as quite inevitable and correct (for they have been made) and as quite arbitrary (for they were choices). In his final exaltation the hero comes to feel that "I'd been right, I was still right, I was always right. I'd passed my life in a certain way and I might have passed it in a different way. . . . I'd acted thus and I hadn't acted otherwise. . . . And what did that mean? That, all the time, I had been waiting for this present moment, for that dawn [of execution—N.L.] . . . which was to justify me" (pp. 151, 152).

The hero *abstains from morally reacting to others* as much as to himself (cf. pp. 34, 45). His incapacity for moral indignation is again related to certain contemporary trends.

What are the behavioral counterparts to the hero's valuelessness? His tendency is to *minimize overt action*, symbolic as well as motor. He tends to react with silence to communications of others, perpetuating the wordlessness of his relations with his mother. He shows a preference for the maintenance of his personal status quo, at any given moment and with reference to his overall mode of life. When an evening conversation imposed on him is

prolonged, he feels that "I wanted to be in bed, only it was such an effort making a move" (p. 41). When his employer offers him a Paris job, "I saw no reason for 'changing my life'" (p. 52). Getting out of bed requires an intense effort.

Whenever he contemplates alternative courses of action, he becomes convinced that they lead to an identical result. Thus nothing is a "serious matter (*une chose grave*)" (p. 53). When his boss offers him a Paris job, "really I didn't care much one way or the other (*dans le fond cela m'était égal*)" (p. 52). When he is present at a tense underworld encounter which may instantly develop into shooting, "it crossed my mind that one might fire or not fire—and it would come to absolutely the same thing (*tout cela se valait*)" (p. 172).

Correspondingly, the hero tends to feel a situation as *invariant* which according to the judgment of non-"strangers" has varied radically. When his boss, offering him a Paris job, stresses the advantages of a "change of life," "I answered that one never changed his way of life" (p. 52).

"The same thing" to which all conceivable courses of action lead is a negative thing. When the hero accompanies the coffin of his mother to the cemetery in the Algerian heat, he is told: "If you go too slowly there's the risk of a heat stroke. But if you go too fast, you perspire and the cold air in the church gives you a chill" (p. 21). He adds: "I saw . . . [the] point: either way one was in for it (*il n'y avait pas d'issue*)" (p. 21). There is no conceivable intermediate optimal point between too much and too little. Similarly—and again with the heat in the role of the great depriver—at a certain point during the morning which ends with the crime, the hero stands before a house he is expected to enter: " . . . I couldn't face the effort needed to go up the steps and make myself amiable to the women. But the heat was so great that it was just as bad staying where I was. . . . To stay or to make a move—it came to much the same (*cela revenait au même*). After a moment I returned to the beach" (p. 73)—a move which leads to the murder.

"One is cooked both ways" because *death is the terminal state of any sequence of acts—which is therefore equivalent to any other sequence*. "Nothing, nothing had the least importance, and I knew

quite well why. . . . From the dark horizon of my future a sort of slow, persistent breeze had been blowing towards me, all my life long, from the years that were to come. And on its way that breeze had leveled out (*égalisait*) all the ideas that people tried to foist on me. . . . What difference could . . . [it] make . . . the way a man decides to live, the fate . . . he chooses, since one and the same fate was bound to 'choose' not only me but thousands of millions of privileged people. . . . Every man alive was privileged; there was only one class of men, the privileged class. And all alike would be condemned to die one day. . . . And what difference could it make if . . . he [the prison chaplain instead of the hero—N.L.] were executed . . . since it all came to the same thing in the end?" (p. 152). This indifferentism with the horizon of death acts manifestly as a defense against distress. Despairing of his girl friend's faithfulness, the hero asks in the context of the passage just quoted: "What did it matter if at this very moment Marie was kissing a new boy friend?" (p. 153). The fatherless and motherless (in more than one sense) murderer asks: "What difference could they make to me, the deaths of others, or a mother's love or . . . God?" (p. 152). Awaiting execution and faintly hoping for the success of his appeal, the hero attempts with conscious and only partly successful effort to make himself see that "it makes little difference whether one dies at the age of thirty or three score and ten. . . . Whether I die now or forty years hence, this business of dying had to be got through, inevitably" (pp. 142-43).

Presumably the belief in death as annihilation has been, and is, spreading and deepening in Western culture. Reactions to this major trend seem to be (as one would expect) polarized. On the one hand there is an increasing tendency to "scotomize" death, i.e. to minimize its role in conscious awareness. On the other hand, a breakthrough of this awareness may dominate the consciousness of the individual in a somewhat new fashion: The massive fact of death may appear as establishing the pointlessness of life beyond any possibility of mitigation. The *tabula rasa* as to previous conceptions of Good and Evil may thus be accompanied by a *tabula rasa* as to previous conceptions of the Meaningful Life.

But the residual certainty of the very fact of life which is accen-

tuated when valuelessness has been established may become the new meaning-creating factor: If death is annihilation, life—all we have—is infinitely precious (a resurgence of the *carpe diem* theme in “highbrow” speculation which has often accompanied the breakdown of civilizations). This is the metaphysical and axiological aspect of the passage on “certainty” quoted above. The sentence quoted “every man alive was privileged” may thus become one denying or affirming the meaningfulness of life according to whether the temporariness or the availability of the “privilege” is stressed. If the positive accent is chosen, the desired though unobtainable “life after the grave” appears as “a life in which I can remember this life on earth. That’s all I want of it!” (p. 150). The hero attempts to get rid of the intruding prison chaplain as “I’d very little time left and I wasn’t going to waste it on God” (p. 150). But there is a price to this reversal: The affects which the negative view intended to ward off by the depreciation of life reappear. The hero awaiting the coming of the executioners every dawn knows every morning that “I might just as well have heard footsteps and felt *my heart shattered into bits*” (p. 152). On the other hand intermittent fantasies of survival give him the task “to calm down that sudden *rush of joy* racing through my body and even bringing *tears* to my eyes” (p. 143). Thus belief in the meaninglessness of life appears in the hero related to the successful repression of affect, and belief in its meaningfulness to the return of the repressed from repression.

What typical conscious motivations remain available to the hero in his predominant negative phases? The hero tends to choose a certain action “for want of anything better to do” or as “I had nothing to do” or “as a last resource” against the unspecified displeasure of more complete inaction. He tends to comply with demands made on him in a “why not?” fashion. When his pimp acquaintance asks him for a favor “I wrote the letter [requested—N.L.] . . . I wanted to satisfy Raymond as I’d no reason not to satisfy him” (p. 41). When the pimp thereupon says “so now we are pals, ain’t we? (*tu es un vrai copain*), I kept silence and he said it again. I didn’t care one way or the other, but he seemed so set on it, I nodded and said ‘yes’ ” (p. 41). When his boss offers

him a Paris job, "I told him I was quite prepared to go; but really I didn't care much one way or the other" (p. 52). When his girl friend asks him if he would marry her, "I said I didn't mind; if she was keen on it, we'd get married." When she objects to this reaction, "I pointed out that . . . the suggestion came from her; as for me, I'd merely said 'yes'" (p. 53).

Presumably the predominance of such "negative motivations" is overdetermined. Affectlessness is here not only a defense against the various fantasied dangers of involvement but also an instrument of aggression against (and contempt for) those persons who expect a fuller response from the hero. The aggression proceeds by spiteful obedience: Demands are complied with in the letter but not in the spirit.

A major "positive" motivation of the hero is *sleep*, functioning as defense against the overwhelming impact of dangerous stimuli. It makes him feel good to look forward to sleep in a short while. At a certain "evening hour . . . I always felt so well content with life (*je me sentais content*). Then, what awaited me was a night of easy dreamless sleep" (p. 13). "I can remember . . . my little thrill of pleasure when we entered the first brightly lit streets of Algiers [returning from his mother's funeral—N.L.] and I pictured myself going straight to bed and sleeping twelve hours at a stretch" (p. 22).

Where other psychic structures would react with intense affect, the hero tends to react with *fatigue* and *somnolence*—which he often attributes to the external physical rather than to an internal psychic "heat" (cf. pp. 2, 132-33).

To the high tendency toward sleep corresponds *the vagueness and poverty of internal and external psychic perceptions* during the hero's waking hours (as implied in footnote 3, his perception of nonhuman aspects of his environment was rich and acute). Low awareness of self is shown in extreme fashion when the hero after a long time in prison suddenly "heard something that I hadn't heard for months. It was the sound of a voice; my own voice, there was no mistaking it. And I recognized it as the voice that for many a day of late had been sounding in my ears. So I know that all this time I'd been talking to myself" (p. 101). Simi-

larly, the hero at important occasions—where, again, he is apt, projectively, to hold the heat of the day responsible—fails to hear or to understand correctly what others are saying to him or about him. When his lawyer pleads for him in court, “I found that my mind had gone blurred; everything was dissolving with a grayish, watery haze (*tout devenait comme une eau incolore ou je trouvais le vertige*)” (p. 312).

More particularly, the hero—having interfered so severely with his own affects—is highly inhibited in the perception of affects of others, especially of those having himself as their target. This lack of empathy facilitates the unconsciously aggressive and self-punitive candidness of the hero, which will be discussed below, and which the critics take at its face value as uncompromising honesty. The same trait also induces a *poverty of the prognostic horizon*. After the hero has witnessed an altercation between the pimp and a policeman, the pimp tells him “he’d like to know if I’d expected him to return the blow when the policeman hit him. I told him I hadn’t expected anything whatsoever (*je n’attendais rien du tout*)” (p. 47).

Affects of others, if perceived, appear “embarrassing” (cf. p. 88). Explicit or implicit demands of others to express empathy (and sympathy) by words responding to their words, or to express other nuances of affect, tend to elicit a “*I have nothing to say*” reaction. When the hero’s girl friend answers his indifferent marriage consent by declaring that she “loves” him because he’s a “queer fellow,” but that she might “hate” him someday, the hero reports: “to which I had nothing to say, so I said nothing” (p. 53). When the magistrate asks the hero about his “reputation of being a taciturn, rather self-centered person” (p. 82), the hero answered: “Well, I rarely have anything much to say. So naturally I keep my mouth shut.” His habitual silence is thus not based on conscious restraint against verbalizing a rich subjectivity, as one recognizes the limitations of words and values privacy. It is a silence expressing subjective void. Only in rare and fugitive instances does this void appear as a disguise of plenitude. At one moment during his trial the hero feels like “cutting them all short and saying: ‘. . .

I've something really important to tell you.' However, on second thought, I found I had nothing to say" (p. 124).

In many instances the hero has nothing to say because *he experiences what others say as meaningless*. (One may recall the central importance, in contemporary empiricist epistemology, of the designation of certain types of sentences as "meaningless"—and hence neither "true" nor "false"—which had been regarded as "meaningful" before.) This is particularly the case when *others talk about the hero's subjective experiences*. When the examining magistrate, using an "intimate" technique, tells the hero "what really interests me is—you!" (p. 82), "I wasn't quite clear what he meant, so I made no comment" (p. 82). When his lawyer asks him whether he had felt grief when his mother died, "I answered that of recent years I'd rather lost the habit of noting my feelings (*m'interroger*) and hardly knew what to answer" (p. 80). When Marie "asked me if I loved her, I said that sort of question had no meaning really (*cela ne voulait rien dire*), but I supposed I didn't" (p. 44). When Marie asks again sometime later, "I replied much as before that her question meant nothing or next to nothing (*cela ne signifiait rien*)—but I supposed I didn't" (p. 52). His sentences on one's own affects appear either as meaningless or as difficult to test—but never as evidently true or false, a quality which earlier epistemology usually attributed to introspective statements.

The syndrome of affectlessness which I have sketched in the preceding passages is a largely *ego-syntonic* one. The hero does not share in the historically typical despair about, and revolt against, psychic impotence—a change which is probably, again, related to contemporary trends. When his boss offers him a Paris job, the hero declares that "my present . . . [life] suited me quite well. . . . I saw no reason for 'changing my life.' By and large it wasn't an unpleasant one" (p. 52). While he is incapable of "explaining" his subjective state, it isn't a problem for him either. Affectlessness is reacted to affectlessly.

Such is the syndrome which dominates the usual life atmosphere of the hero. But besides the affect inhibitions hitherto described the hero shows a set of affect substitutes. Some of them are *somatic*.

When the hero leaves a consciously entirely flat conversation with the pimp, "I could hear nothing but the blood throbbing in my ears and for a while I stood still, listening to it" (p. 42). Other affect substitutes are nonsomatic. Certain *perceptions of detail*, closely associated with the central matters to which the hero does not react consciously, show a *high intensity* and at the same time *unreality*. When he is holding a wake at the coffin of his mother without any conscious grief, ten of her friends are with him: "Never in my life had I seen anyone so clearly as I saw these people. . . . And yet . . . it was hard to believe they really existed" (p. 10). At the funeral itself he perceives in a father figure—the "boy friend" of his mother in the home for the aged—the somatic image of his affect inhibition: "His eyes were streaming with tears. . . . But because of the wrinkles [in his face—N.L.] they couldn't flow down. They spread out, crisscrossed and formed a smooth gloss on the old, worn face" (pp. 21-22). The hero is bored by the prosecutor's speech at his trial: "The only things that really caught my attention were occasional phrases, his gestures, and some elaborate tirades—but these were isolated patches" (p. 124).⁴

Related to such affect substitutes is *doubt about details* closely associated with central matters. The novel begins with a doubt about a detail of the mother's affectlessly experienced death—reminiscent of Leonardo's slip (cf. Freud, Vol. VIII, pp. 190-91) in his diary notation of his father's death: "Mother died today. Or, maybe, yesterday. I can't be sure. The telegram from the Home says: YOUR MOTHER PASSED AWAY. FUNERAL TOMORROW. DEEP SYMPATHY. Which leaves the matter doubtful; it could have been yesterday" (p. 1). . . .

I have up to now discussed the hero's defenses against affect. What are the particular affects which have been repressed, and whose repression is secured by the defenses described? I shall suggest that a major affect involved is murderous rage originally directed against the depriving parents.

Most of the evidence for this hypothesis has been neglected by the critics, who have thus not conveyed a full picture of the hero's manifest syndrome. When Edmund Wilson (*The New Yorker*,

April 13, 1946) considers the possibility of latent destructive tendencies of the hero, he rejects it as incompatible with his affectlessness: "At the moments when he [Meursault] has to decide whether to act in some definite way, he always thinks to himself, 'After all, it will make no difference whether I do or do not do this!' But the fact is that in spite of his supposed indifference, he does decide one way and not the other. He agrees to write the letter for the pimp [to an unfaithful prostitute on whom the pimp wants to avenge himself—N.L.], thus abetting him in an act of malevolence; therefore, he was either not indifferent to the interests of his acquaintance or not indifferent to the pimp's purpose of doing something mean to the girl. And since his killing of the Arab is deliberate . . . he is, again, either not indifferent to the welfare of the pimp [whose enemy the Arab, the brother of the unfaithful prostitute, is—N.L.] or not indifferent to killing an Arab. . . . These acts of his which are inconsistent with the assumption that he is genuinely indifferent are never accounted for." However, conscious indifference and intense unconscious destructiveness are not only a possible but even a typical combination.

The hero presumably experiences intense *guilt about the death of his mother*, toward whom he has felt conscious, though consciously feeble, death wishes (pp. 14, 80). In accordance with his overall techniques of defense against affect, he has largely repressed guilt feelings. When the magistrate asks him whether he regrets his murder, he answers that "what I felt was less regret (*du regret véritable*) than a kind of vexation (*un certain ennui*)" (p. 87). When the public prosecutor accuses him of his lack of guilt feelings about the murder, "I'd have liked to have a chance of explaining to him in a quite friendly, almost affectionate way, but I have never been able really to regret anything in all my life" (p. 127).

Having repressed his guilt feelings, the hero additionally projects the accuser into the outer world. While he consciously feels innocent of his mother's death, he believes exaggeratedly or at least prematurely that others accuse him of it, or of his behavior in connection with it. (As will be seen below, he behaves presumably in part with the unconscious intent of provoking accusations.) He

tends spontaneously to react to such accusations apologetically rather than counterassertively. When he fixes up a two days' leave with his employer to attend his mother's funeral, "I had an idea he looked annoyed and I said, without thinking: 'Sorry, sir, but it isn't my fault, you know'" (p. 1). When the warden of the Home in which his mother died briefly recapitulates her history in the Home, "I had a feeling that he was blaming me for something [i.e. sending his mother to a Home—N.L.] and started to explain" (p. 3). At the wake near his mother's coffin "for a moment I had an absurd impression that they [his mother's friends who are present—N.L.] had come to sit in judgment on me" (p. 11). When he for the first time makes love to Marie the day after his mother's death and when Marie learns about this death, "I was just going to explain to her that it [his mother's death—N.L.] wasn't my fault, but I checked myself as I remembered having said the same thing to my employer, and realizing then it sounded rather foolish (*cela ne signifiait rien*). Still, foolish or not, somehow one can't help feeling a bit guilty, I suppose (*De toute façon, on est toujours un peu fautif*)" (p. 24). Finally, the public prosecutor at his trial affirms emphatically that "this man . . . is morally guilty of his mother's death," and adds—referring to a parricide which is on the court's agenda—that "the prisoner . . . is also guilty of the murder to be tried tomorrow in this court" (p. 128). The projected tends to return from projection: when the hero's "callousness" about his mother's death is shown in court, "I felt a sort of wave of indignation spreading through the courtroom and for the first time I understood that I was guilty" (p. 112).

Another major manifestation of the hero's intense unconscious rage consists in the commission of acts which aggress his environment and provoke it into aggressing him, thus alleviating his guilt. The self-destructive aspects of these acts is only little conscious; and the same is true for the aggressive aspect of some of them. For example, the hero adopts a "free association" policy in his verbal utterances, however grave the consequences of this may be. When he is asked to speak at his trial, "I said the first thing that crossed my mind . . . as I felt in the mood to speak" (p. 129). The hero is consistently and consciously *frank, in words and acts, in*

expressing the nonconformism corresponding to his affectlessness. (For many of the hero's fictional predecessors the refusal to conform to conventional modes of expressing affect had been related to the awareness of a unique intense nuance of affect which insisted on its own channels.) He indicates clearly his lack of grief about the death of his mother and refuses to go through the paces of conventional mourning behavior (p. 31, *passim*), his atheism (p. 85, *passim*), his lack of response to others as conveyed by silence.

The effect, of course, is to stimulate hostilities directed against himself. But the hero scarcely—or only belatedly—recognizes this. He has, indeed, little empathy for his environment's aggressive reactions to acts of his own which are interpreted as aggressive. As he represses destructiveness in himself, he denies it in others. When he communicates to his lawyer his unfavorable attitudes toward his mother, the lawyer makes him promise "not to say anything of that sort at the trial" (p. 80). Thereupon the hero attempts to satisfy the lawyer: "Anyhow I could assure him of one thing: that I'd rather Mother hadn't died." He has no awareness of the unfavorable impact of such a communication. On the contrary, a recurrent conscious motivation of his is "to keep out of trouble," for example, by complying with demands made by others. Similarly, at the trial (where he behaves with resigned passivity and his usual provocative candor) he has great difficulties in realizing emotionally the seriousness of the public intent to murder him for his murder. He exaggerates the mildness of the world, and this is the counterpart to the presentation of the world as deprivational by withholding: the world isn't sufficiently interested in me to be out for my skin. (This belief also serves as a defense against panic.) Thus the imprisoned hero lacks up to a late moment the conviction that he is in danger: "At first I couldn't take him [the examining magistrate—N.L.] quite seriously. The room in which he interviewed me was much like an ordinary sitting-room . . ." (p. 78); "it all seemed like a game" (*ibid.*); "When leaving, I very nearly held out my hand and said 'Good-bye!'" (*ibid.*). When a routine of conversations between the magistrate, the hero, and his lawyer has become established, "I began to breathe more freely. Neither

of the two men, at these times, showed the least hostility toward me, and everything went so smoothly, so amiably, that I had an absurd impression of being 'one of the family' " (p. 88). When he first sees his jury, "I felt as you do just after boarding a streetcar and you're conscious of all the people on the opposite seat staring at you in the hope of finding something in your appearance to amuse them. Of course, I knew this was an absurd comparison" (p. 103).

Beside chronic covert self-destructive aggressiveness stand major explosions of overt aggressiveness: the murder of the Arab and an assault on the prison chaplain. A closer analysis of these acts may show how they fit into the character structure hitherto described. How are the defenses against completing rage overcome?

1. The aggressions are felt as *inexplicable explosions originating outside the self and overwhelming it*. "Then [at a certain point in the protracted exhortation addressed by the prison chaplain to the hero awaiting execution—N.L.] I don't know how it was, but something seemed to break (*crever*) inside me, and I started yelling at the top of my voice. I hurled insults at him. . . . I'd taken him by the neckband of his cassock, and, in a sort of ecstasy of joy and rage (*colère*), I poured out on him all the thoughts that had been simmering in my brain" (p. 151).

The murder of the Arab is presented as forced upon the hero by the primarily somatic and only secondarily psychic impact of the *heat* (a projection of the hero's impulses, we may surmise, onto emanations of the sun, a frequent paternal symbol): "As I slowly walked towards the boulders at the end of the beach [where the hero will find his victim—N.L.] I could feel my temples swelling under the impact of the light" (p. 73). When he is near the Arab, whose posture is then entirely defensive, "it struck me that all I had to do was to turn, walk away, and think no more about it. But the whole beach, pulsing with heat, was pressing on my back (*se pressait derrière moi*). All the sweat that had accumulated in my eyebrows splashed down on my eyelids, covering them with a warm film of moisture. Beneath a veil of brine and tears my eyes were blinded; I was conscious only of the symbols of the sun clashing on my skull" (pp. 74-75). (The sun as inducer of "daze,"

while a bout of intense motor or psychic activity is performed, recurs throughout the novel.)

The murder itself appears—with a projection of destructiveness onto a target yet more remote from the self—as a cataclysmic release of violence in nature: “Then everything began to reel before my eyes, a fiery gust came from the sea, while the sky cracked in two, from end to end, and a great sheet of flame poured down through the rift” (p. 76).⁵

According to *Newsweek* (April 15, 1946) the hero “commits murder . . . with the utmost casualness.” According to *Time Magazine* (May 20, 1946) “he . . . casually pulls the trigger of the revolver.”

2. The hero consciously attempts to *resist* the explosion of aggression. First, he prevents his pimp acquaintance from shooting the Arab whom he later kills. When he walks on the beach in the direction of his victim, “each time I felt a hot blast strike my forehead, I gritted my teeth, I clenched my fists in my trouser pockets and keyed up every nerve to fend off the sun and the dark befuddlement (*cette ivresse opaque*) it was pouring into me . . . my jaws set hard. I wasn’t going to be beaten.” But the very attempt to resist the consummation brings it nearer: The sun appears at this moment as “trying to check my progress” and thereby leading the resisting hero unknowingly toward his victim. Once confronted with this victim, the sun bars retreat (cf. above), although the hero, taking another step forward, “knew it was a fool thing to do” (p. 75).

3. The hero encounters his victim *without knowing* that he will do so: “I was rather taken aback” (p. 74).

4. The hero appears to himself as *acting in self-defense*. His fantasies of being destroyed (suggestive of castration anxieties) go far beyond the real threat. When “the Arab [at a safe distance and with an apparently defensive purpose—N.L.] drew his knife and held it up towards me, athwart the sunlight . . . a shaft of light shot upward from the steel, and I felt as if a long, thin blade trans-fixed my forehead. . . . I was conscious . . . of the keen blade of light flashing up from the knife, scarring my eyelashes and gouging into my eyeballs” (p. 75).

5. The hero has a *conscious instrumental motivation* in performing the acts leading up to his crime; this motivation is *superego-syntonic*. He approaches, unknowingly, his victim, who is in the shadow and near water, in search of relief from the sun. Walking on the beach, "the small black hump of rock [behind which the Arab is lying—N.L.] came into view. . . . Anything . . . to retrieve the pool of shadow by the rock and its cool silence (*J'avais envie . . . de retrouver l'ombre et son repos*) . . . I couldn't stand it [the heat—N.L.] any longer, and took another step forward. I knew it was a fool thing to do; I wouldn't get out of the sun by moving on a yard or so. But I took that step, just one step forward. And then the Arab drew his knife" (p. 75).

6. Guilt-alleviating and anxiety-enhancing factors such as the ones mentioned facilitate the temporary but total return of the repressed rage from repression. The *self-punitive* significance of such a return has the same effect. The heat driving the hero to murder and hence to his execution "was just the same sort of heat as at my mother's funeral" (p. 75): the hero atones for that funeral by arranging his own. He feels at the end that he is going to be "executed because he didn't weep at his mother's funeral" (p. 152).

In addition, "perhaps the only things I knew about him [the hero's father—N.L.] were what Mother had told me. One of these was that he'd gone to see a murderer executed" (p. 138). Presumably the hero's own execution is in part for the benefit of this fantasied spectator who "had seen it through," although "the mere thought of it turned his stomach," and who afterwards was "violently sick" (p. 138). (Also "when we lived together, Mother was *always watching me*"—p. 3.) One may surmise that inducing the father to be sick has the significance of having a *sexual relation* with him. One may also surmise that being executed in front of the *scotophilic* father has an *exhibitionistic* meaning. One may further assume that this act is an *expiation* for aggressive tendencies toward the father in general and his scotophilia in particular: "at the time [when the hero's mother told him the story—N.L.] I found my father's conduct rather disgusting. But now I understood; it was so natural" (p. 138). Furthermore, the hero identifies himself with a fantasied spectator of executions (his own?) and thus

induces an oral scopophilic and sadomasochistic ecstasy bordering on panic: "The mere thought of being an onlooker who comes to see the show and can go home and vomit afterward, flooded my mind with a wild, absurd exultation (*un flot de joie empoisonnée me montait au coeur*) . . . a moment later I had a shivering fit . . . my teeth went on chattering" (pp. 138-39).

These gratifications induce rationalizing elaborations of the fantasy of attending executions: "Often and often [awaiting his own execution—N.L.] I blame myself for not having given more attention to accounts of public executions. One should always take an interest in such matters. There is never any knowing what one may come to. . . . How had I failed to recognize that nothing was more important than an execution; that, viewed from one angle, it's the only thing that can genuinely interest a man. And I decided that if I ever got out of jail I'd attend every execution that took place" (pp. 136-38).⁶

7. The hero's extreme aggressions are probably unconsciously intended to *extort concern*—be it in the form of indulgences or deprivations—from a world whose real or fantasied neglect had induced chronic suicide by affectlessness. This syndrome breaks down when the hero, in the extreme situation of impending execution, is exposed to affect indubitably directed toward him. He is then able to drop the image of the world as essentially uninterested in him and to react with felt affect to perceived affect. Having gotten a rise out of the world, he can get one out of himself. When at a certain moment of this trial the hero "for the first time realized how all these people loathed me . . . I felt as I hadn't felt for ages. I had a foolish desire to burst into tears" (p. 112). When the owner of his habitual restaurant testifies in his favor with moist eyes and trembling lips, "for the first time in my life I wanted to kiss a man" (p. 116).

8. Presumably, punishment means for the hero—among other things—love. In this context the story of Salamano, a degraded old man living in the hero's apartment house, and his degraded dog, is relevant. (Thinking of Salamano "for some reason, I don't know what, I began thinking of Mother"—p. 50.) The spaniel—of whom the hero's mother had been very fond—is "an ugly brute,

afflicted with some skin disease—it has lost all its hair and its body is covered with brown scabs” (p. 32). The dog’s relation to his master is presented as an extreme sadomasochistic one, with most of the overt sadism on the side of the master. Salamano repeatedly utters death wishes toward the dog. But when the maltreated spaniel finally escapes (to his death), Salamano is in despair and expresses unconditional love for, as well as total dependence on, the lost object.

9. Presumably the “you’ll be sorry afterwards” theme just alluded to enters into the hero’s self-destructiveness. In prison he finds only one scrap of an old newspaper reporting a murder case: A son is murdered by a mother who ignores his identity. When she learns about it she commits suicide. “I must have read that story thousands of times. In one way it sounded most unlikely, in another it was plausible enough” (p. 100).⁷

10. The hero’s acts of violence discharge to some extent his destructive tendencies; hence a *diminution of the countercathexis* which is expended on interfering with them. Therefore, the degree of the hero’s affectlessness decreases during his sojourn in prison. He discovers memory; time had been more difficult to kill in freedom. Now he can *express affectionate tendencies toward the punishing world*: “I can honestly say that during the eleven months these examinations [by the Magistrate—N.L.] lasted I got so used to them that I was almost surprised at having ever enjoyed anything better than those rare moments when the Magistrate after escorting me to the door of the office would pat my shoulder and say in a friendly tone: ‘Well, Mr. Antichrist, that’s all for the present’” (p. 88). After his second act of violence—directed, this time, against an obvious father figure, the prison chaplain, and rendering his execution doubly certain—his affectionate tendencies are more fully released and attain the level of serene happiness: “It was as if that great rush of anger had washed me clean (*comme si cette grande colère m’avait purgé du mal*)” (p. 154). After the assault the hero falls asleep from exhaustion. *Awakening he experiences a reconciliation with the indifferent world and its prototypes, the indifferent parents*; he can love them though he knows they do not love him: “. . . for the first time, the first, I laid my

heart open to the benign (*tendre*) indifference of the universe. To feel it so like myself, indeed so brotherly." "Almost for the first time in many months I thought of my mother" (p. 153). He "understands"—and identifies with—her having played at making a fresh start just before her death by taking on a "fiancé" in the Home for the Aged where she lived. The novel ends with the revocation of the father's execution scotophilia and with a leap from the acceptance of the indifferent world to the acceptance of the punishing world: "For all to be accomplished, for me to feel less lonely, all that remained to hope was that on the day of my execution there should be a huge crowd of spectators and that they should greet me with howls of execration (*haine*)."

A satisfactory language of aesthetics scarcely exists. If it did, I would attempt to formulate in it a favorable judgment on *The Stranger*. Assuming such a judgment, it may be surmised that the psychological plausibility (in this case, the "common-sense" implausibility) of the content contributes to the aesthetic value of the novel—which, on the other hand, depends on "formal" characteristics. Among these there is one of general importance which can be particularly well shown in this novel with its unusual terseness and concreteness of style: the high degree of *implicitness* of the unconscious content layers. That is, the reader is *not* (as he is in numerous "psychologically oriented" contemporary productions) told in *so many words*, or *obtrusively* led to see, connections of the order of those discussed in this paper. Conceivably the author is less than fully aware of these connections and certainly the critics—and those readers for whom they speak—are largely unaware of them. The conditions and consequences of the antagonism between explicitness and aesthetic impact—an antagonism which has, of course, already received psychoanalytic attention—seem to warrant further speculation and research.

¹ *L'Etranger*, Paris, 1942. Translated by Stuart Gilbert (New York, 1946). All page references are to the American edition. All italics in quotations are supplied.

² Dr. Martha Wolfenstein's suggestions have contributed to a number of points in this matter.

³ This is in sharp contrast to the intensity of his reactions to external non-personal stimuli—to the colors (cf. pp. 14, 20, 93), smells (cf. pp. 10, 20), tactile values (cf. pp. 14, 61, 92, 95), sounds (cf. p. 122) of cityscape and landscape. These he knows to be his "surest, humblest pleasures" (p. 132). The hero is also presented as feeling a persistently strong and unbrokenly euphoric sexual attraction toward his girl friend—almost the only point in which I would question his plausibility. Perhaps the author, so free from many illusions, is here still presenting a derivative of the Western myth on the transcendent position of "love" in human nature.

⁴ Some critics mistake such defenses for completions of impulse. Thus Richard Plant (*Saturday Review of Literature*, May 18, 1946), affirming that the hero's "animal instincts [sic] are nicely developed" gives as evidence that he notes with extraordinary sharpness "the heat, the faces of his mother's friends, the sharp light in the morgue."

⁵ When violence begins, the projective impulsion by heat ceases: "The trigger gave. . . I shook off my sweat and the clinging veil of light (*J'ai secoué la sueur et le soleil*)" (p. 76).

The hero then goes on to fire four more shots. This the magistrate, the public prosecutor, and Edmund Wilson (*The New Yorker*, April 13, 1946), takes as a conclusive indicator of "deliberateness." The novel gives no clues on the immediate context of these "loud, fateful rap(s) on the door of my undoing" (p. 76).

⁶ Some *speculative* points may be ventured here. The hero's interference with his destructive tendencies toward his father is accompanied by an identification with the (projectively) destructive father. In his precrisis equilibrium the hero is the consciously unintentional spectator of a number of beatings, and the equally unintentional audience of stories about beatings: He sees or hears an old man living in his house maltreating his dog, the pimp beating his unfaithful girl, a policeman beating the pimp, the pimp beating the Arab and being counterattacked by him. The pimp tells him about previous beatings of the girl and of the Arab. (While these habitual "affectionate-like" beatings of the girl "ended as per usual," the hero's love-making to Marie is free from overt destructive admixtures.) In the murder of the Arab, however, he makes the decisive transition toward an act of violence of his own. On behalf of what may be a degraded father figure (the pimp) he aggresses (by his complicity in the pimp's revenge scheme) what may be a degraded mother figure (the pimp's Arab girl) and destroys her brother-defender himself? If so, his murder would be a suicide not only in its unconscious provocative intent but also in its immediate significance.

⁷ If this were a "real-life" case, the exposure of the subject to the story would be regarded as accidental and his reaction to it as significant. As this is a fantasy case, both are significant. This point is implicit in certain preceding passages of this paper, e.g., in the discussion of the hero as a frequent spectator of beatings (cf. note 6).

Part Three

ERNST KRIS

*The Contribution and
Limitations of Psychoanalysis*

WHAT ARE THOSE things like which, by contemporaries or (under changed conditions) by posterity, tend to be endowed with the specific aura which the word ART conveys? What must the men have been like who made these things, and what did their work mean to themselves and to their public?

These are some of the questions which the study of art suggests and which no one discipline of knowledge can hope to answer; moreover, no answer can hope to be satisfactory unless these questions are interrelated. In this essay we are concerned with the actual and potential contribution of psychoanalysis to this wide field of inquiry, which, however ill defined, cannot fail to exercise a singular fascination.

In speaking of psychoanalysis we refer to a complex set of constructs and general assumptions on which specific hypotheses are based, to a broad framework for the study of human behavior which allows for the study of a large number of interdependent factors. Psychoanalytic propositions fulfill the general requirements of theory in science. They unify special assumptions under more

general ones, indicate what tests for validation and refutation of specific hypotheses are meaningful, and facilitate the formulation of new hypotheses which in turn can be tested. Hence constructs and basic assumptions must be revised from time to time in order to retain their usefulness.

In many instances, particularly when psychoanalysis is being "applied" outside of clinical work, its contribution tends to be characterized by one or several quotations from Freud's writings. Not that their value should be minimized; but isolated quotations, however poignant, tend to convey a static impression and suggest that Freud mainly attempted to demonstrate the validity of a given set of hypotheses, adding, as it were, insight from various sources. Nothing could be more misleading. Freud's work consists of continuous attempts to unify detailed observations by an explanatory framework and to revise the theory thus obtained in the light of new empirical data or impressions. This revision led repeatedly to radical reformulations of constructs, basic assumptions, and specific hypotheses—a development which tends to be obscured by the reliance on "representative quotations."¹

From the early days of psychoanalysis many authors, utilizing primarily clinical observations, participated in the process of revision of theory, sometimes stimulating Freud's own revisions and reformulations and at other times contradicting his views.

This process has gained momentum with the increase in numbers of trained analysts. When alternative propositions reach a certain point, "schools" of analytic thought arise and are propagated. Next to rather obvious psychological factors, the nature of the subject matter itself is responsible for such consequences of controversy: The difficulty of deciding between alternative propositions favors the tendency to substitute dissent for discussion. We do not mean to imply either that decision between alternatives cannot be reached or that opposing views are destined to coexist: The testing of hypotheses would in many instances (particularly the more important ones) require a considerable amount of time as well as complex testing procedures, and crucial experiments can only rarely be specified. In most instances clarification depends on the gradual progress of insight derived from many sources of

evidence, mainly the progress of clinical observation and of therapeutic technique. Of their subsidiaries, psychoanalytically oriented studies in child development illustrate best the productive aspects of "validation." By bringing new problems to the observer's attention, validation becomes part of the regular progress in science.

Dissent in psychoanalysis must be mentioned in this context not only to characterize the writer's position, but also for reasons pertaining to the subject at hand. In discussions on psychoanalysis and art the tendency to simplify or to abbreviate psychoanalytic thinking is particularly noticeable. This seems to imply that the psychological understanding of art requires simpler assumptions than the psychological understanding of the activities more regularly or exclusively investigated by psychiatrists—a view that need not be refuted once one has pointed to its clandestine existence. It might, however, be useful to illustrate in what way simplification tends to be misleading. While in their clinical work psychiatrists are accustomed to assess carefully the requirements of a specific environmental situation, the "reality" in which the artist creates is often neglected. "Reality" is used here not so much in the restricted sense of immediate needs and material environment as in another and extended sense: The structure of the problem which exists while the artist is creating, the historical circumstances in the development of art itself which limit some of his work, determine in one way or another his modes of expression and thus constitute the stuff with which he struggles in creation.

The widespread neglect of such circumstances, supreme in C. G. Jung's contributions to the vast area of psychoanalysis and art, is facilitated by the use of an abridged, and hence frequently vulgarized, conceptual framework. The nature of this abridgment, as far as Jung is concerned, has been discussed in considerable detail by Edward Glover. To no other system of alternative propositions has a similar discussion been devoted. However, it seems that the schools of psychoanalytic thought—whatever their scope—which have developed during the last decades resemble in one respect the earlier ones, exemplified by Jung's approach: They have to organize isolated alternatives into a systematic presentation. They tend to reduce the complexity of psychoanalytic thinking and to

offer abridgments by creating artificial dichotomies. Some abandon the "biological" roots for the emphasis on "social" aspects—an antithesis which in itself is spurious—or reverse the relationship by ignoring environmental conditions. They may limit the scope of the instinctual drives for the sake of the inhibitory and controlling organizations, or take the opposite attitude. Many of them eliminate constructs—preferably, concepts of energy—which seem highly serviceable and do not replace what they omit except by recourse to concepts unrelated to psychoanalysis itself; and thus the usefulness of psychoanalysis as a theory is impaired. The later work of Otto Rank, particularly his voluminous book on *Art and the Artist* (1932), offers the most regrettable example of a similar procedure. While it excels by its array of information, there is no thought to unify this material, but rather an endeavor to disprove what Freud, and Rank himself, wrote earlier. The vast amount of quotation from sources of various degrees of reliability screens the fact that the conceptual framework of psychoanalysis has been simplified to a point where it can contribute hardly more than common-sense psychology of the pre-Freud era.

The present attempt, opposed to abridgments and simplifications, rests on the assumption that the complete system of psychoanalysis offers at present the best chances for understanding and predicting human behavior. It is an "open system," achieved by synchronizing hypotheses which have been formulated during the total course of the development of psychoanalysis—a system not only exposed to constant amplification and emendation, but based on the clarification of some semantic contingencies.

The potential contribution of psychoanalysis to the study of art can, I believe, be assessed only if one takes advantage of the differentiated tools psychoanalytic theory offers. But this is not the only precondition; at least one other must be mentioned. Art—the humanities in general—tend to be viewed as a province outside the confines of science, and if science penetrates into their field it is in the disguise of history. Historians are skilled in establishing the nature of events of the past (and no one is less inclined than the writer to underestimate the rigor of their methods). The events themselves, however, concern human behavior and are part

of that broad, ill-defined field which reaches from anthropology to the confines of medicine—the cultural and social sciences. Seen in this context, the study of art is part of the study of communication. There is a sender, there are receivers, and there is a message. These all are, it is true, of a very special and enigmatic kind, and yet only if viewed within a similar framework can the study of art become part of the gradual integration of our knowledge of man.

During the last twenty years there has been repeated discussion of the question of the distance from psychoanalytic thinking at which the social sciences in general find it useful to formulate their assumptions. While the sociologist or economist studies predominantly aspects of human life different from those with which psychoanalysis deals—man's central psychological conflicts—the student of art shares presumably common ground with the psychiatrist: It has been said that he deals with similar stuff. As in other areas of research, the attempt to use psychoanalytic thinking may well lead art criticism to propositions derived from psychoanalysis but designed to meet the special requirements of its own field; a significant step wherever interdisciplinary contact is established.

While the potential contribution of psychoanalysis to the study of art is thus bound to lead into uncharted land, an evaluation of its actual, past contributions can best be obtained if we briefly turn to the history of psychoanalysis itself. In its heroic age the validity of the earliest hypotheses had to be established. Clinical data were scarce and could in many instances not be communicated in support of the hypotheses. Moreover, when clinical data could be used, there remained the objection that Freud's general psychological findings were valid only within pathology. The study of documents of culture, foremost among them works of art, seemed a field where supplementary evidence could be gained. The intensive research activity which followed on the opening of this nonclinical field was mainly concerned with three problems: first, the "ubiquity" in mythological and literary tradition of certain themes known from or related to the fantasy life of the individual; second, the close relationship between the artist's life history in the psychoanalytic sense and his work; and, third, the relationship between the working of creative imagination, the productive

capacity of man, and thought processes observed in clinical study.

The very fact that certain themes of human experience and conflict are recurrent wherever men live or where, at least, certain cultural conditions prevail (best known from the tradition of Mediterranean civilizations)—the fact that from Sophocles to Proust the struggle against incestuous impulses, dependency, guilt, and aggression, has remained a topic of Western literature—seems after almost half a century, as well established as any thesis in the social sciences. It has proved immensely stimulating, opening vistas that had remained inaccessible as long as the comparative study of mythological and literary themes had been based exclusively on general cosmological or specific historical considerations. Progress beyond these initial findings—richly documented in the early encyclopedic writings of Otto Rank—has on the whole turned in one major direction: psychoanalytic interpretation was expanded. The complexity of these themes became more firmly established. The existence of a larger number of contributing determinants seemed better to account for the intensity of appeal which these themes retained.

This expansion of interpretation of mythological and literary themes reflects some trends in the development of psychoanalysis. When the emphasis on the uniqueness of the mother-child relationship during the pre-Oedipal phase had gained importance in Freud's thinking, the destiny of Oedipus, for example, came to be viewed not only as a fate determined by the rivalry between son and father, but also by the son's unsatisfied longing for, and retaliatory impulses against, a mother who had betrayed her infant. Hamlet's conflict was no longer viewed only in relation to his repressed parricidal impulses, but as codetermined by his hidden and dangerously submissive attachment to an idealized father. Some authors went further and stressed the part which matricidal impulses play in Hamlet's musings. Similar additions and reinterpretations of widely spread themes have become rather frequent. They use a fair sample of the hypotheses which during the last decades have developed, some intending to supplement, others to supplant, older psychoanalytic interpretations. Wherever controversy arises—it is rarely made explicit—decision must be expected

to come from the area in which these hypotheses were formulated, that is, from clinical and experimental studies.

However significant some of these additions to previously assembled knowledge are, they have not basically enlarged our views. It is striking that extensions of research have neglected one aspect. The wide distribution of certain themes was particularly revealing as long as Freud's hypotheses on the generality of certain instinctual strivings was being tested, that is, as long as the study of the id dominated psychoanalytic interest. Since psychoanalytic ego psychology has sharpened our eyes for the specific within the general, one might have expected that the variations of general themes previously studied would have attracted attention and that the question would have been asked: Under specific cultural and socio-economic conditions, during any given period of history or in the work of any one of the great creators within each period, how have the traditional themes been varied? What aspects of the themes are more and which less frequent, and how are they modified? It seems that a wide field of research waits for those interested in interdisciplinary integration.

For different reasons, progress in the second area of original psychoanalytic interest has been limited. It no longer seems doubtful that what a man has experienced during infancy or childhood (particularly if experience is not restricted to external events but includes patterns of conflicts and their solution) may influence as a recurrent theme (or as a defense against it) his thought processes, his dreams, and his artistic creations. The extent to which psychoanalytic insight has advanced in this respect need hardly be stressed. In particular, the constructs of ego psychology, interacting with the constant refinement of techniques for handling developmental problems, have sharpened our eye for the relevance of early experiences. And yet it is significant that we have remained incapable of penetrating to the central problem which evaded Freud's ingenuity. When studying Leonardo da Vinci he had been able to enter deeply into the secrets of a man of genius. Determinants of Leonardo's scientific interest, his obsessional and frequently self-defeating working habits, could be plausibly traced to infantile imprints. The child raised by two mothers—the peasant

mother and the wife of his father, in whose house he grew up—was stimulated to unite almost for the first time in Italian painting the Virgin and St. Anna with the infant Christ. Unity between the three was established not only by gestures; they seem to merge into each other since they are inscribed into a pyramidal configuration. By similar devices Leonardo created in several of his paintings compositions which exercised considerable influence on the development of the art of his time. The phenomenon investigated has thus been approached from two sides, the life history of the artist and the solution of the artistic problem: One can demonstrate the interaction of an incentive in the individual life history with the stringencies of an artistic problem, determined in Leonardo's case by the development of Italian painting.

Significant as it is, this very possibility illustrates the limitations of our understanding. Two such limitations deserve our particular attention. The first concerns mainly the individual; the second, his relation to his medium and its potentialities under given historical conditions.

We have no answer to the question why an individual with the infantile experience and the particular pattern of defenses Freud was able to reconstruct in Leonardo's life history was fated to become the great creator. It is not the lack or imprecision of the data used by Freud and accessible to him in this case which can be made responsible for this limitation. Even when we are in a position to rely on the innumerable and detailed observations which clinical study of creative individuals in psychoanalytic observation and therapy brings to the fore, this question remains unanswered. All progress we have made has led into one direction, which for the sake of simplicity I shall call here vocational choice.² Psychoanalytic material enables us to point to the interaction of factors which made one individual turn to painting, the other to dancing, writing, or music. At times even broad generalizations are suggested; we may feel able to say why one prefers action, another contemplation or speculation, why—with apparently similar predispositions—one devotes his life to science and the other to art.³ We have gained a good deal of experience in accounting for obvious failures in performance, and psychoanalytic therapy

achieves some of its most gratifying results in helping individuals overcome both general impairment of their working capacity and inhibitions in specific types of endeavor. However, after all this has been properly taken into account, there remains the question not only of why one is successful and the other is not, but, particularly where science or art is concerned, why one is great while the other barely reaches medium height.

We do not at present have tools which would permit us to investigate the roots of gift or talent, not to speak of genius.⁴ However, recent advances in ego psychology enable us better to focus on this gap in our knowledge and suggest inquiries which promise to improve our understanding. We have come to view psychological conflict not only as an unavoidable accessory to personality development, but also—within certain limits—as an essential ingredient and incentive. We are about to study ego development not only in relation to typical conflicts, but also as far as the ego's capacities and functions emerge from conflict involvement and acquire autonomy. In this connection the endowment of the personality, its innate equipment, plays a significant role. We had been used to view it in terms of potentialities of the individual which might be favored or smothered by life experience, stimulated or suppressed by some of the numerous factors on which maturation and development depend. We are about to appreciate complementary aspects, that is, the influence which endowment may exercise on life experience, and particularly the role endowment may play in facilitating the detachment of certain ego functions from conflict, in establishing autonomy in certain activities.⁵ These views prove not only useful in organizing clinical impressions, but particularly stimulating in observing child development. However significant the results of these studies may prove to be one day, their impact on the problem at hand, the psychology of the artist, will, for a considerable time, remain indirect.

The question of endowment of individuals for specific activities may gradually, and only in years to come, play an increasing role in psychoanalytically oriented research. The second problem to which we were led by our discussion of Freud's contribution to

our understanding of Leonardo's work suggests even more arduous detours.

Historical and social forces, we said, shape the function of art in general and more specifically that of any given medium in any given historical setting, determining the frame of reference in which creation is enacted. We have long come to realize that art is not produced in an empty space, that no artist is independent of predecessors and models, that he no less than the scientist and the philosopher is part of a specific tradition and works in a structured area of problems. The degree of mastery within this framework and, at least in certain periods, the freedom to modify these stringencies are presumably part of the complex scale by which achievement is being measured. However, there is little which psychoanalysis has as yet contributed to an understanding of the meaning of this framework itself; the psychology of artistic style is unwritten.⁶ We may expect that the method of approach will be an extremely complex one; what psychoanalysis may have to offer will probably depend on our ability to view the phenomena of style in art at least in part in terms of the processes of discharge which they stimulate in artist and public.

Investigative procedures which have this goal in mind will have to vary according to the medium of artistic expression examined. Psychoanalytic experience can suggest mainly one principle: Instead of accepting the division of form and content, maintained in many areas of the history and the criticism of art, psychoanalytic orientation suggests the value of establishing their interrelation.⁷ To illustrate the difficulties of such attempts, we return once more to Leonardo's painting. Our understanding of his achievement would gain if, in addition to being able to demonstrate that the desire to unite the Christ with two mothers is rooted in his childhood experiences, we were able to find a similar root for the specific type of merging—for instance, for the construction of a pyramidal unit into which the figures are made to fit.⁸

The third of the main avenues on which psychoanalysis approached the wide area of art led to the study of the artist's imagination. In the initial stages of his work, Freud felt that only the attempt at vigorous scientific thinking established a difference be-

tween his approach and that of the intuitive psychologists among the poets whose writings he had always admired. Even when there was no longer any doubt about the independent character of the contribution psychoanalysis was able to make, late in his life, he spoke of philosophers, writers, poets as "the few to whom it is vouchsafed . . . with hardly any effort to salvage from the whirlpool of their emotions the deepest truth to which we others have to force our way, ceaselessly groping among torturing uncertainties."

Throughout the history of analysis statements of men of introspective genius who had anticipated some aspect of psychoanalytic insight have been quoted. No attempt has as yet been made to survey this material. While Plato, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Pascal, Hobbes, Lichtenberg, Coleridge, Goethe, Melville, Hawthorne, Nietzsche, Henry James, and Proust, to mention only a few, have contributed views which in many ways coincide with what psychoanalysis has ascertained by another method, the fact that with each of these men another aspect of psychological dynamics becomes important has to my knowledge never been fully discussed; the history of intuitive insight waits to be written, if for no other purpose than to demonstrate how the great are less than others subject to the limitations which cultural and historical conditions impose.

This at least is the impression one gains in another area, in which the creations of the masters of intuitive psychology were made subjects of analysis. Behavior and motivation of characters in literature are viewed as the analyst views his patients; the scope of these studies has gradually developed, and they have added a new dimension to our understanding of literature. Recurrent themes in the works of certain writers, treatments of certain conflicts and avoidance of others, have brought us closer to an understanding of the process of creation in literature than any other approach; and yet it cannot and should not be claimed that this approach exhausts all aspects relevant to what can be called here, loosely, an adequate understanding of literature as art.

The reaction of the writer himself to psychoanalytic interpretations of his work has proved revealing in the few instances in which it has been recorded. When Freud published his most de-

tailed analysis of a work of narrative art, the essay on dreams and delusion in the novel *Gradiva*, the aged author, Wilhelm Jensen, a distinguished but not outstanding German writer, reacted to the publication in several letters. He was impressed by Freud's interpretation, found that it had fully come to grips with the intention of the novel, but was unaware of the multiple determinants in the hero's dreams and delusion to which Freud's analysis had pointed. "It might be best," he wrote, "to attribute the description of the psychological process . . . to poetic intuition, though my original training as a physician may have played a part."⁹ When, during analytic treatment, previously produced works of art are investigated, similar responses seem to be typical. Jensen's approval was limited to the recognition of the link between conscious and preconscious thoughts which Freud had established, but his introspection could not encompass what was repressed. During psychoanalytic treatment it seems comparatively easy to establish connections between preconscious elements in the artist's work and those of which he had always been aware. The contributions derived from the storehouse of memories and the sometimes very numerous clues borrowed from one or the other source in the environment and condensed into a single trait appear in analytic material sometimes without particular effort.¹⁰ But only extended analysis leads to repressed psychic material, to motivation from the id—and only this allows full demonstration of the interaction and interconnection of elements derived from various stages of awareness.¹¹

The study of this interaction entered the orbit of psychoanalytic investigations early in its history, since its understanding could be based on a comparison of the dream work with what one might call the "art work"; a comparison particularly significant because of the differences which it emphasizes. Freud himself first approached the topic in his study on *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), and since several of the essays which follow elaborate his thoughts, we limit ourselves here to one remark only, anticipating what will later be discussed in greater detail. The relationship of the ego to the id encompasses not only the question of the extent to which id strivings are being satisfied or

warded off or the compromises which are achieved. It also encompasses the relationship of primary to secondary processes; but the relationship familiar in dream work is reversed: We are justified in speaking of the ego's control of the primary process as a particular extension of its functions. What in the dream appears as compromise and is explained in terms of overdetermination appears in the work of art as multiplicity of meaning, which stimulates differentiated types of response in the audience. The fruitfulness of these points of view in the progress of modern criticism and the theory of art has been considerable; it seems to have stimulated years ago the work of William Empson, who lately has extended his approach to the study of linguistics. At the same time it offers an access to that complex field which we mean when we speak of "the psychology of *the* artist."

The capacity of gaining easy access to id material without being overwhelmed by it, of retaining control over the primary process, and, perhaps specifically, the capability of making rapid or at least appropriately rapid shifts in levels of psychic function, suggest psychological characteristics of a definite but complex kind. The most general, one might say the only general, hypothesis advanced in this respect came from Freud (1917), who speaks of a certain "flexibility of repression" in the artist.¹² This flexibility, or whatever other and more satisfactory characteristics we might establish, is clearly not limited to the artist: These characteristics are related to those conditions in which id impulses intrude upon the ego and this leads to the question of the extent to which pathological dispositions may be part of what constitutes the artist. It is this problem to which Freud referred when he said (1905) that "a considerable increase in psychic capacity results from a predisposition dangerous in itself." The protection against these dangers lies, according to Freud, in the function of the ego, in its capacity for sublimation.

In order to equip ourselves for the subsequent steps in our discussion, it is necessary at this point to widen the scope of our presentation and to touch upon matters seemingly distant from our topic. The usage of the word "sublimation" in Freud's own writings is far from consistent and was subject to a number of vicissi-

tudes; as a consequence a number of shades of meaning persist in general psychoanalytic usage. However, the variations of meaning tend to be less frequently discussed than the conditions under which, according to clinical observation, sublimation is favored, a topic of central importance in all therapeutic contingencies.

Sublimation, listed also as one of the defense mechanisms of the ego, designates two processes so clearly related to each other that one might be tempted to speak of one and the same process: it refers to the displacement of energy discharge from a socially unacceptable goal to an acceptable one and to a transformation of the energy discharged; for this second process we here adopt the word "neutralization."¹³ The usefulness of the distinction between the two meanings becomes apparent when we realize that goal substitution and energy transformation need not be synchronous; the more acceptable, i.e., "higher," activity can be executed with energy that has retained or regained its original instinctual quality. We speak then of sexualization or aggressivization. Clinical experience points to this danger which may be responsible for malfunctions of various kinds from symptom formation to inappropriate performance.

There is one further theoretical problem, particularly complex yet probably of considerable significance, that has still to be mentioned: Freud's distinction between primary and secondary processes was based on the idea that in the former energy was fluid, ready for immediate discharge, in the latter, bound, at the disposal of the ego. One might be inclined to assume that in speaking of neutralized energy we have in fact only substituted another word for bound energy, that the two conditions are identical. However, there are reasons which make it advisable to refer to both conditions as frequently but not always synchronous; they are to some extent independent variables. Hence the degree of neutralization may be low, yet we may be dealing with secondary processes; while fully under the control of the ego, fully bound, the energy may still have retained the hallmark of libido or aggression.

The tools which psychoanalytic theory puts here at our disposal have not yet been fully utilized. It seems possible not only to organize the structural characteristics of various types of ac-

tivity according to the opportunities they offer for more or less direct discharge of instinctual energy, but also to organize them according to the degrees of neutralization of libidinal and aggressive energies which they "require."

The topic is a wide one and fundamental to many general problems in adaptation and personality development. It includes the problem of secondary autonomy in ego functions since one is led to the assumption that secondary autonomy depends on the irreversibility of energy transformation, i.e., on the permanent or relatively permanent investment of the ego with neutralized aggressive or libidinous energies. However, in addition to these partial and relatively permanent changes in energy distribution which seem to be of signal importance for personality development, one would have to account also for the energy flux, i.e., the transitory changes in energy distribution and redistribution such as the temporary and shifting reinforcement of sexual, aggressive or neutral energy as it may occur in the course of any type of activity. Sublimation in creative activity might conceivably prove to be distinguished by two characteristics: the fusion in the discharge of instinctual energy and the shift in psychic levels.

The idea of the fusion of libidinal and aggressive energy plays a considerable part in Freud's formulation on psychoanalytic theory. In the study of creative activity, however, one special aspect of this broader problem may prove relevant, namely, the special assumption that a certain degree of energy neutralization provides favorable conditions for fusion and hence for the mastery of even particularly intense instinctual demands.

In speaking of shifts of psychic levels we refer to the organizational functions of the ego, to its capacity of self-regulation of regression and particularly to its capacity of control over the primary process; problems which in some of the subsequent essays are treated in relation to special areas of investigation.

We cannot in the present context and at the present stage of our understanding attempt to elaborate on these suggestive possibilities and have to abandon the idea of a systematic presentation lest we impose too great a strain on our as yet limited ability to handle highly complex problems of psychoanalytic theory in ex-

treme abbreviation. We may only point to what may be the goal of such a systematic presentation. As far as artistic activities in the broadest sense are concerned we might be led into areas of problems with which traditionally the theory or philosophy of art deals or has dealt, problems concerning the hierarchy of various media and various works of art. However, there is no doubt that we are familiar with similar problems, though on a different level. In clinical practice, by rule of thumb, views concerning both specific problems of energy discharge and of ego functions in relation to specific types of creative behavior are taken for granted.

Our expectations are significantly limited when we hear that a certain patient is an actor, a dancer, a cartoonist, or a dress designer. They are less limited but still significant when we hear that he is a writer, painter, architect, or poet. In all these cases—in the first instances more definitely—we expect that certain typical conflict constellations will more likely occur than others: The problem of rapidly changing identification may be crucial in the actor, that of coping with exhibition in the dancer, the wish to distort others in the cartoonist, and to adorn them in the dress designer; but each of these dominant wishes—which we here have mentioned only in order to characterize one direction of our expectations—is clearly merged with innumerable other tendencies in the individual, and each of them is rooted in his history. According to clinical experience, success or failure in these professions depends, among other factors, on one to which we referred before: on the extent to which the activity itself has for any particular individual become autonomous, i.e., detached from the original conflict which may have turned interest and proclivity into the specific direction. It is at this point that the much-discussed question of the function of psychoanalytic therapy in relation to creative capacities can be considered. Therapy may facilitate or even bring about this detachment of creative ability and of the urge to create from immediate conflict involvement.¹⁴ At this point the relation to the “special gifts and predispositions which are not commonly found in sufficient degree” gains importance; endowment facilitates the detachment from conflict of those “higher and

finer" types of activities "in art and science which at all times are the privilege of a selected few."

Gifts and predispositions have to be studied not only in their relation to the conflict in which they may have been rooted, and from which they emerge, but also in relation to the structure of the activity in which they are put to use. Here again a variety of conditions has to be taken into account, foremost among them the properties of the media and their function under those special historical conditions which determine the modes of expression and the "problems" to be solved. It will not be found that the same equipment, the same psychological proclivities, will in all periods of history make for success—in any given medium or in artistic creation in general. Thus the artist whose endowment is determined at least in part by the "flexibility of repression" to which Freud referred—the one who borders on pathology and conquers it by his work—is likely to appear as a leader in art at certain periods and not in others. In this sense the "selection" of artistic leaders may well proceed according to the same general principles which seem to determine the selection of leadership in other areas. In the same sense that the structure of a political situation may attract certain personality types as main actors, the structure of a situation in the development of art in general, or of a specific medium, may elicit participation from those whose predispositions are likely to fulfill the requirements at the given moment. These requirements may in turn be modified by the participants; thus new and different types of personalities may become important.

Put in these general terms, the problems seem simple. To apply the principle to any concrete field is another, infinitely more difficult, matter—one that once more reminds us of the wide open spaces, the areas where integrated research alone can become fruitful. From what is known at present we may deduce that the artist whose creative capacities are close to potential pathology will find his place more easily in "romantic" than in "classical" periods of art; and since these very terms are not too well defined, except when applied to the historical movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the psychological aspect may help to clarify some of the problems traditionally linked to what we call "the

style." However, the very contrast we mention is a narrow one; we may come close to relevant dichotomies when we think of cultural conditions in which skill alone predominates and is seen as value in art and others where skill without inspiration is held in low esteem—and others again where inspiration with even less skill becomes acceptable and admired.

In the history of almost all the arts since the eighteenth century the trend to an increased insistence on inspiration seems to be detectable—dominant in certain phases, more submerged in others, and yet clearly continuous as a movement that gained increasing strength, to the point where dream and fantasy could be painted and put into words, where relation to stringencies became less important, and where finally the work of art became a document of the process of creation. In the field of literature this trend has repeatedly been characterized, particularly by Praz and Fretet; in the representational arts it is outlined by the genealogy which leads from Goya to van Gogh and to surrealism.¹⁵

From another angle we now approach the relation of psychoanalysis to art: During the last decades psychoanalytic insights into the processes of artistic creation have themselves become part of art. Creative artists of our day are wont to use free association as a training ground for creative thinking or as an independent mode of expression, and some among the surrealists have assigned to their work the function of documenting the process of creation itself, thus making explicit what previously had been implicit. In the present context this is only mentioned since it indicates a reversal of functions; psychoanalysis and its discoveries act as a social force upon art and artist.

If in the light of these limitations we review once more the contributions of psychoanalysis to the study of art, the question arises of the extent to which these contributions are specific, applicable to art as distinct from other human endeavors. Obviously, this specificity is true only in a limited sense: Newspaper reports are frequently concerned with events no less similar to general themes in mythology and individual fantasy than are great works of literature. The impact of childhood on all human activities is permanent. Psychological intuition is a prerogative of many lead-

ers in society, and while it is particularly important in many types of art, problems of sublimation and neutralization concern a much wider field.

The quest for what is specific to the psychological processes connected with art, its creation and its re-creation, constitutes a problem that we can hardly hope to solve. All we can hope is to approach it from afar, but we are entitled to value every step we are able to take in the desired direction. We propose to take structural, dynamic, and economic changes which seem to be characteristic of what one might call the aesthetic experience into account. Our starting point will be the function of art as a specific kind of communication from the one to the many.

¹ In order to illustrate the difficulties which arise, particularly in interdisciplinary communication, we mention as an instance only Sterba's summary of Freud's views on art which eliminates many misunderstandings due to what might be called the "quotation method." Sterba stresses the gradual unfolding of Freud's ideas and—perhaps not quite sharply enough nor in enough detail—the reformulations which occurred. When used by non-analysts—e.g., in the otherwise excellent book by Weitz—this intention of Sterba's summary is largely neglected; psychoanalysis continues to be treated as a "static" system.

² Findings of psychoanalysis in this area can apparently not be duplicated if the data are obtained by other methods than psychoanalytic observation and therapy, even if in the interpretation of data a psychoanalytic viewpoint is adopted.

³ Investigations of problems that are related to this area have been undertaken by Roe, largely based on projective tests. Roe started out to study and was led to tentative generalizations in the area of vocational choice, generalizations which are of considerable interest, e.g., a comparison of feminine traits in artists, scientists, and a large group of professions comprising teachers, ministers, and physicians.

⁴ Bergler writes, "Personally I believe that we are able to define the biological and psychological x producing the phenomenon 'of the writer.' Biologically it consists of a quantitative increase of oral tendencies, including the derivations of orality-voyeurism." At this point Bergler's formulation seems strictly opposed to the view developed later in this essay. However, Bergler continues, "These two biological facts do not *per se* make a writer. In addition there is a specific psychological elaboration, the defensive 'unification' tendency [Bergler's italics] denying infantile fancied disappointments experienced at the hands of the preoedipal mother, by autarchically setting up the 'mother child shop.'" . . . At this point a specific defense mechanism "*encountered exclusively in the artistically creative person*"

[Bergler's italics] is postulated. It seems conceivable that such a specificity of defense mechanism might be positively correlated with a certain autonomy in ego function, both primary and secondary.

⁵ In this simplified rendering of an important part of psychoanalytic theory we have implied certain distinctions suggested by Hartmann, particularly his distinction between primary and secondary ego autonomy.

⁶ It is significant that no other psychological approach has led to tangible or meaningful results. Thus the attempt to use Gestalt psychology by Sedlmayr has not led to insight into the psychology of style, nor have recent contributions by Arnheim and others, who still seem to be engaged in searching for a "good" Gestalt, valid under all historical circumstances. Ehrenzweig has recently successfully broken away from this tradition and attempted to combine Gestalt psychology and psychoanalytic thinking. However, his interest is largely centered on a phylogenetic explanation. There are few references to concrete phenomena familiar to the psychoanalyst or other investigators of empirical data. Without referring explicitly to Gestalt psychology, Weiss has pointed to what I think may prove to be a bridge between what Gestalt psychologists would refer to as *praegnanz* and psychoanalytic thinking when he suggests that "formal aesthetic pleasure is economy of expenditure of psychic energy in perception."

⁷ Freud's translation of the formal characteristics of the dream into latent dream thoughts offers the model for similar investigations.

The psychoanalytic approach to the problem of formal elaboration has been studied also in relation to music, a field which I do not feel competent to discuss.

⁸ One is tempted to establish a connection between the insertion of the figures into a superimposed body and Leonardo's interest in procreation and pregnancy. However, I do not feel that the evidence at our disposal is specific enough to establish a relationship between "form and content" on a level which would essentially improve our understanding. Pfister's attempt to recognize in the painting the vulture of Leonardo's screen memory, analyzed by Freud, has not convinced me.

⁹ Judging from similar instances, that part can only have been a minor one.

¹⁰ The psychological approach to literary criticism has achieved its most impressive results where the attempt was made to trace similar material by a study of the artist's life history and the sources available to him. It suffices here to refer to Lowes' work on Coleridge, Murray's on Melville, or Paden's on Tennyson. For the specific psychoanalytic evaluation of material thus assembled see, e.g., Beres' recent study on Coleridge.

¹¹ It is regrettable that clinical material of this kind has only rarely been available and in most instances cannot be made available. It should, however, be said that it tends to remain highly incomplete, because its exploration is part and parcel of the analytic process and subject to the limitations imposed by the therapeutic purpose. Similar considerations concern artistic productions during the course of analytic treatment; this situation is, however, even more complex, since artistic productions tend to be influenced by the existence of the analytic contact and serve, additionally or essentially, the purpose of communication in analysis.

¹² Related to this flexibility is another of Freud's hypotheses, his emphasis on the artist's bisexuality, which plays frequently a role in the passive experience during creation.

Various authors have contributed hypotheses which could be viewed as pointing to ontogenetic factors related to both of Freud's suggestions. I mention particularly Lowenfeld who assumes that early traumatic experiences form one of the preconditions to artistic creativity in stimulating a lasting need to repeat actively what was once experienced passively. There is a possible connection between this suggestion and those of Bergler's (see note 4), who in a large number of analyzed cases of "writers" found among other factors the prevalence of the defense against oral-masochistic tendencies. A survey of these and other views on the psychoanalytic psychology of "the artist" is not intended here. Such a survey would have to distinguish between two approaches: There are those who connect the psychology of the artist mainly with typical patterns of conflict and those who focus mainly on structural problems in the artist's personality. At the present time the second approach seems to be the more fruitful one.

¹³ We do so since "sublimation" when used to designate energy transformation tends to designate that of libido only; since we assume throughout that the transformation concerns both libido and aggression, the term "neutralization" offers better opportunities to avoid misunderstandings. The term "sublimation" could thus be reserved for the relation to the goal.

¹⁴ The alleged sterilizing effect of analytic experiences on the creator seems in this context as another example of a spurious topic; we would be faced with instances in which creation was solely determined by conflict (e.g., solely serving the purpose of defense) and did not have a place in the autonomous sphere of the ego. This seems broadly to coincide with the clinical experience of psychoanalysts: The gifted artist "spoiled by analysis" seems to be a rare occurrence.

¹⁵ Fretet, a literary critic and physician, stresses that "since Rousseau, melancholic and delirious states play a prominent role in the history of art. They have a literary tradition. . . ."

HENRY LOWENFELD

*Psychic Trauma and
Productive Experience in the Artist*

THE FOLLOWING IS based on the analysis of a woman artist in the course of whose treatment some light was thrown on a process of artistic development that is characteristic of at least one type of artist.

A woman of thirty sought treatment for increasingly serious states of anxiety and various physical complaints and inhibitions in her work over a period of several years. She felt herself a failure, unable to complete anything she undertook. For years her leading symptom had been hypochondriacal ideas. She believed herself to be suffering from chronic, fatal diseases such as tuberculosis of the throat, arteriosclerosis or tumor of the brain. Behind these hypochondriacal fears were partly concealed paranoid ideas.

She was a very vivacious, intelligent woman of fine appearance with a somewhat unfriendly facial expression. Her manner was partly insecure and shy, partly aggressive. She was preoccupied with her body and much of her time was spent in all sorts of activities revolving about her appearance and health. She was inclined to favor mannish, sport clothes.

She both drew and painted. In her early career she had drawn much from nude models, especially women; then for several years she painted pictures which grew out of dreamlike visions and had a fantastic, mysterious quality. At the age of about twenty-two, she gave up this type of work for commercial art. She was gifted and original, had a strong imagination, but was hindered in her work by a technical inadequacy resulting from her inability to devote herself to consistent study, a situation of which she was painfully conscious. Difficulties arising in her work created a feeling of complete insufficiency. Wrestling with these difficulties was sometimes fruitful of achievement which was sufficient to win her some degree of recognition. Despite a predominant feeling of inadequacy, she also had moods in which she felt distinctly talented and creative.

She had a brother, two and a half years older than she. She herself was a twin; the other child, a big handsome boy, died a few months after birth. She had been, she was told, a small and sickly child. She related that upon delivery she had been placed upon the floor and ignored because everyone was busy with the second, bigger child, a difficult delivery. The twin brother played an important part in her fantasy.

She described her father, a landowner who had died a few years before, as a coarse, brutal and hot-tempered person; her mother as timid, anxious, constantly worrying and complaining. The older brother was favored by both parents. He was a bright, obedient child, while she was defiant, and was considered intolerably bad and disobedient by the whole family. She quarreled frequently with her father who beat her when angered. On such occasions she would heap abuse on him with all the resources of her vocabulary and wish he were dead.

The period between her seventeenth and twenty-second years was artistically her most productive. A sexual experience with an older man was followed by several Lesbian relationships in which she played the more passive role, and in which she felt comparatively content. During the same period she had several flirtations with men in which she remained indifferent until she met the man she married. She saw in him a powerful, athletic

man. This attracted her and was, in her opinion, the decisive factor in her choice. But in the marriage relationship it developed that he took the more passive, devoted attitude toward her, while she played a more masculine active role, at times tormenting and sadistic. She could become sexually excited, but never completely satisfied.

From childhood and particularly frequently in recent years, she had dreams from which she awoke in terror or with feelings of horror. The dreams were mostly of scenes of war: revolution, bombardments, riots from which she was trying to flee though paralyzed with fear.

Her life consisted of an alternation between hunger for experiences and excitement—a “greed for impressions” as she called it—and escape and withdrawal. The short periods of hunger for experience and excitement quickly led to increased anxiety and to paranoid delusions in which she imagined herself being hurt, robbed or persecuted by women. There were experiences in which it was impossible to determine what was delusion on her part and what reality, because she probably unconsciously provoked situations which made various women become her enemies. Hypochondriacal sensations of every type she interpreted as confirmation of her fears. She would get a feeling of being completely abandoned, unloved and incapable of loving. She would lose all contact with the world around her. This detached state likewise led to anxieties. Interest in her own body was her roundabout way of finding contact with the outer world once more. A new dress could banish her despair.

She had numerous recollections from early childhood of instances when her father, in a sort of rude tenderness, would place his whole weight upon her. She could not breathe and feared being crushed, suffocated. Her protests angered her father and this often led to violent scenes. On one such occasion (warding off her father with her knee drawn back) with the heel of her shoe she wounded her genitals sufficiently to cause bleeding. She was greatly frightened. Her mother, equally frightened, called a doctor. Toward her guilty father she felt revengeful satisfaction. This event was the basis of a sleeping ceremonial: to this day she sleeps

with one hand on her genitals, one leg drawn back, as though in defense.

Another important experience of her childhood occurred in about her seventh year. After an address by her father in the legislature, a mob tried to force its way into her parents' house; stones were tossed against the windows which were hastily shut. Her father was absent, and the family was in terror. Both of these traumatic experiences returned repeatedly in her dreams in combined form. From the same period she also has recollections of states of anxiety when on her father's return from one of his frequent trips she was sent from her parents' to her own adjoining bedroom. She would try to overhear what was taking place, and apparently experienced numerous primal scenes or fantasies in this way.

These experiences, recurrent in her anxiety dreams, were followed by two more experiences, decisive for the later onset of the neurosis. When she was about twenty-one, a well-known clairvoyant predicted that she would end her life in insanity or by suicide, and warned her not to masturbate so much. In order to understand fully the disastrous effect of this prophecy, one must know in detail the history of her infantile masturbation in which prohibitions and warnings of terrible sicknesses played an important part. It is sufficient here to point out that she had been in the habit, during almost intoxicated periods of artistic activity, of rubbing against the edge of her easel, thus providing herself with a sexual stimulus. Following the prophecy she gave up this type of activity, thus losing a safety valve for her tensions. From this point began the real development of her neurosis, at first evident in withdrawal and restraint, later in the occurrence of states of anxiety.

Following an unnecessary appendectomy and many other therapeutic failures she lost faith in doctors and now turned to spiritualism. While in a trance a medium received messages foretelling that the city in which the patient lived was to be destroyed by force from above. This prediction placed the patient in such a state of anxiety that she fled from home. The basis of her belief in this prophecy could be traced to her childhood. For years she

had awaited the inevitable coming of disaster. By fearing it she sought to prevent it. Only if she thought of it constantly, would it perhaps not occur. In her recollections from childhood her father appeared as an inexorable force, blocking every avenue of escape. This inescapable, inexorable force now appeared as the destructive danger from above. Or perhaps it was, "a snake which climbs down the wall" into her bed; or the horror she felt at the sight of bloody fishes or small birds both in her dreams and in reality. This feeling of the inevitable was also a part of her delusion of sickness. We find here a feeling of guilt the consequences of which are inescapable.¹

Vague occult ideas she sought to withhold from the analysis as her most intimate secrets. According to them, the human being lives several different lives, having to atone in each life for the guilt of the preceding one. She believed herself to have been one of the first feminists. Not having been able to reconcile herself to being a woman, she became a man. In her next incarnation she was to be born a boy but die young in atonement for her previous life. However she had to fulfill her fate as a woman. In another incarnation she was destined to die in childbirth. This conflict between masculine and feminine, mixed with feelings of guilt, found expression in her painting. She imagined that she did not create pictures herself, but made copies under the astral guidance of a man who transmitted them to her.

While this patient had rejected her father, she had sought by every means, particularly illness, to bind her mother more closely to her. She lived in constant fear that her mother would have another child. An aunt, living in the same house, she had seen pregnant several times. She loved her dearly and developed violent sadistic impulses against the pregnant body of her aunt who, in this condition, could no longer take her on her lap. Her childhood and later life were characterized by this strongly ambivalent attitude toward both parents.

The coincidence of artistic talent and neurotic disposition has long been observed. Artistically talented persons almost without exception are subject to neurotic conflicts. They suffer periods of neurotic inhibition in their work, periods of depression and hypo-

chondria, fear of insanity, tendencies toward paranoid reactions, and, relatively frequently, schizophrenia. Freud has emphasized that the essential talent of the artist cannot be explained by psychoanalysis. In *Dostojewski und die Vätertötung* he speaks of Dostoevsky's "unanalyzable artistic talent." Artistic sublimation appears to be possible only with the concurrence of definite elements of talent. Nevertheless, one might ask what forces drive toward sublimation. In order to achieve a better understanding of the connection between artist and neurosis, one must investigate the nature of the artist's instincts and psychic structure. On this basis, the urge to artistic production as well as the danger of neurotic illness might be explained.

In the case here presented the striking element is the significance of traumata for the patient's life. Experiences which are little different from the experiences of other people take on a traumatic character and are fitted into the patient's traumatic pattern. Moreover, she provokes situations which for her become traumatic. Her early experiences with her father, it is true, must be regarded as typical psychic traumata—repeated stimuli of such character and intensity that the child is unable to cope with them. Although it must be assumed that every child has experiences which have traumatic effect upon the still weak ego, we seem to deal here with a degree of traumatic susceptibility exceeding the normal. Here one is reminded of the numerous statements of artists themselves concerning the nature of their experience. Out of the wealth of such familiar and often quoted autobiography, we quote from the famous dramatist, Hebbel: "I am often horrified at myself when I realize that my irritability, instead of decreasing, is constantly increasing, that every wave of emotion, arising even from a grain of sand thrown by chance into my soul breaks about my head." In Ricarda Huch's book on the romantic movement we find this alternation between oversensitivity and dullness and insensitivity presented in innumerable variations. The artist, she says, "is constantly occupied in reacting to the endless stimulations he receives, his heart, seat of irritability, tortures itself in this struggle, driving his blood violently through the organism to the point of powerless exhaustion, to be aroused by stimuli once more."²

If we very briefly summarize the comments about the artist to be found in analytic literature, we have the following: the essential material from which the artist constructs his work is derived from unconscious fantasies in which his unsatisfied wishes and longings find expression. The compelling experience stems from the Oedipus complex. The artist suffers, according to Sachs' formulation, more than others from a feeling of guilt from which, through the participation of others in his art, he achieves recognition and is able to free himself. The narcissism of the artist transfers itself to his work. In the literature of the past few years emphasis has been given to reparation of the destroyed object as a function of art.

In our case we find confirmation of these observations. As long as the patient's artistic work, relatively uninhibited, could serve as an outlet for her tensions, she was able to spare herself the formation of neurotic symptoms. In her work of this period, as in her dreams later on, she repeatedly portrayed the traumatic experiences of her childhood as well as traumata of her later life. The repetition compulsion demands that the injury be overcome again and again. But why does this not finally succeed? Why does this compulsion not cease, as in the genuine traumatic neuroses which after some time usually subside?

In genuine traumatic neurosis the stimulus defense is perpetrated by an external trauma. The intensity of the excitation is too great to be overcome at the instant of occurrence. The attempt to overcome it is continued afterwards, but the trauma itself remains a solitary experience. In our case—and this appears characteristic for artistic sensitivity—the trauma is re-experienced indefinitely. As long as the drive which led to the trauma is active, it remains unaltered and subject to the repetition compulsion. The danger feared is one of re-experiencing a former state of helplessness produced by an overwhelming excitation. A greater accessibility to the unconscious characteristic of the artist brings him to closer proximity to the strata of the psyche in which the primitive impulses rule.

The testimony of many artists bears witness to a particular irritability, a more than average impressionability conducive to psychic

traumata, having its basis in the transformation of instincts and the "constitution" of the individual. We know more about the fate of the instincts than about constitution. The strong instinctual excitations, never completely discharged, give even trivial experiences a particularly impressive character. About the corresponding constitution little is known, but one is forced to assume its existence. One most important aspect of this constitution is the narcissism of the artist of whose significance the statements of artists³ themselves and the results of analytical studies leave no doubt. The psychopathology of artists likewise points to narcissism: hypochondria, depressive and paranoid tendencies, frequent schizophrenias.

In *Dostojewski und die Vätertötung*, Freud states that a bisexual constitution is one of the conditions or furthering factors of the neurosis. "Such [a constitution] must definitely be assumed for Dostoevsky and manifests itself in potential form (latent homosexuality) in the significance for his life of friendships with men, in his remarkably tender attitude toward rivals in love and in his unusual understanding for situations which can only be regarded as repressed homosexuality, as many examples from his writings bear witness. . . ." Another part of the same paper says: "We may trace the fact of his extraordinary feeling of guilt as well as his masochistic way of living back to a particularly strong feminine component. That is the formula for Dostoevsky: a man of especially strong bisexual constitution."

This formula may well hold true for the artist in general. Above all, it throws light upon the coincidence of artist and neurosis. Heightened bisexuality, a complication in the resolution of the Oedipus phase, increases ambivalence and feelings of guilt, thus giving rise to conflicts which easily lead to neurosis.

The concept of bisexuality, emphasized by Freud for Dostoevsky, contains a truism which has been stated by most artists in moments of self-expression. In bodily structure, too, particularly in likenesses of young artists we find a conspicuously large number of characteristics of the opposite sex. We are familiar with the relative frequency of overt homosexuality or strong homosexual tendencies in artists of both sexes. Sappho gave Lesbian love its name.

In Freud's Leonardo da Vinci, Sadger's Kleist, and in Hebbel and many others, the strong bisexual element is established. Kris writes in his paper on Franz Xavier Messerschmidt that in his self-portrait "the defense against seduction as a woman" plays the essential part. "What he creates—his own countenance—seems feminine to him." In Ricarda Huch's book on the German romantic movement, we find an abundance of such material.

In the case of the patient we have described, parturition fantasies were prominent in childhood and puberty. Later, pregnancy and childbirth filled her with horror and disgust. Her dream life was nevertheless filled with fear-wracked anal parturition fantasies which usually terminated in an incapacity to give birth and a return to her mother. Her variously determined physical symptoms proved in part to be distorted pregnancy fantasies. Beside the guilt feeling which ruled her life, the feeling of "inadequacy of her body" played a decisive part in the frustration of her desire for children. The feeling of inadequacy arose from comparison with the favored brother and with the beautiful deceased twin. The symbolic equation, child = penis, was also transferred to her artistic activity and was lost only temporarily when an artist birth act, after violent struggle, was successfully carried to completion.

We find such comparisons in the writings of numerous artists, in which the hardships as well as the pleasures of creation, in like manner, are repeatedly described as the pains and pleasures of giving birth, and in which their own works are spoken of as their children. Thus Thomas Mann writes that "all forming, creating, producing is pain, struggle and pangs of labor." Rank cites Alfred de Musset: ". . . Creation confuses me and makes me shudder. Execution, always too slow for my desire, stirs my heart to terrible palpitation and weeping, holding back violent cries only with difficulty, I give birth to an idea." In another place: "It [the idea] oppresses and torments me, until it becomes realizable, and then the other pains, labor pains, set in, actual physical pains that I cannot define. Thus my life passes away, if I let myself be dominated by this giant of an artist who abides in me." Here we see the tension between the two elements distinctly expressed. The betting in work emphasizes sometimes the masculine, sometimes

the feminine element—creation or surrender. In the fantasies of my patient regarding her work, this split was clearly expressed by the fantasy that her drawings were delivered to her by a painter, a man; she merely copied them. In another life, she had been a man and the dead boy twin was a part of her for which she was constantly searching.

This conflict and tension can never be completely resolved in actual life; it represents, in a way, a condition of unavoidable, inherent frustration. This frustration is the source of the artist's fantasy, driving him again and again to forsake disillusioning reality and to create a world for himself in which he, in his imagination, can realize his desires. It forces him to sublimation. The play of the child too, to which Freud has linked the fantasy of the artist, develops from the circumstance that the child for biological reasons is still largely denied the realization of his desires and the mastering of reality. It is characteristic of the artist that gratification by fantasy alone does not satisfy him; he feels the urge to give form, to give birth to his work. The birth of the work leads temporarily to satisfaction and relief from tension.

The analogy to children's play is even closer, serving as it does the two purposes: one, the pleasurable gratification from fantasies in which unfulfilled wishes are realized; second, the mastering of painful experiences in repetitious acting-out. We find both elements in the artist's work. Frustration drives him to construct his own imaginary world of gratification, and in his art overcathexed experiences are constantly re-created as in play. In comparing the works belonging to different periods of an artist's life, we find a predominance now of one element and now of the other.

Returning briefly to the problem of susceptibility to trauma, one might speculate as to whether the traumatophilia of the artist cannot be linked to his heightened bisexuality. This bisexuality makes a unified, nonambivalent object relationship difficult in relation to both sexes, thus favoring narcissistic libido fixation which again increases the danger of trauma. In a very enlightening passage from Hebbel's diary, we find this concept implicitly stated. He writes that of the "two antitheses" only one is ever given to us.

The one having advanced into existence, however, yearns constantly towards the other, sunk back into the core. If it could really grasp it in spirit and identify itself with it; if the flower for example could really conceive the bird, then it would momentarily dissolve into it; flower would become bird, but now the bird would long to be the flower again; thus there would no longer be life but a constant birth and rebirth, a different kind of chaos. The artist has in part such a position to the universe; hence the eternal unrest in a poet, all eventualities come so close that they would embitter all reality for him, if the power which engenders them did not likewise liberate him from them, in that he, by giving them shape and form, himself assists them, in a way, to reality, thus breaking their magic spell; it requires, however, a great deal and far more than any human being who does not experience it himself, within himself, can surmise, not to lose equilibrium. And natures lacking genuine form-giving talent must of necessity be broken in spirit, whence, therefore, so much pain, and madness too.

A problem is touched upon here which is of basic significance for this discussion—the problem of identification. The significance of bisexuality in the life of the artist receives here its main support. For how could the artist succeed accurately in portraying so many characters of both sexes if he did not find them within the realm of his own experience? What, for instance, would bring the male artist to describe the life of a woman if he did not in so doing reproduce his own unfulfilled experience? In the striving to solve and overcome ambivalent attitudes, identification is always attempted. The artist projects his ego in polymorphous transformations into his work, that is, he projects his inner experiences into an imagined outer world. The *real* outer world, however, is also experienced by identification. We find then a process of alternate introjection and projection. No better description of this can be given than that found in a letter of Schiller:

All creatures born by our fantasy, in the last analysis, are nothing but ourselves. But what else is friendship or platonic love than a wanton exchange of existences? Or the contemplation of one's Self, in another glass? . . . The eternal, inner longing to flow into and become a part of one's fellow being, to swallow him up, to clutch him fast, is love.

Artistic expression is the sublimation of this eternal, inner longing. The quest for exactness of expression, the passion for the *mot juste* arises from this never fully satisfied urge; the struggle with the word is the struggle for identification in sublimated form. Flaubert, who would struggle for days for a single phrase, wrote: "If one possesses the picture or the feeling very exactly within one's self, then the word must follow."

How the urge to identification is experienced and the urge to creation arises from it, is very sensitively described in a short story by Virginia Woolf. She describes a railroad journey. Opposite her sits a poor woman whose unhappy expression leaves her no peace. "Ah, but my poor, unfortunate woman, do play the game—do, for all our sakes, conceal it!" The game that all people should play is to conceal their feelings. The unfortunate woman had a twitch, a queer headshaking tic. The author attempts to keep herself from being influenced, tries to protect herself by reading the *Times*. In vain. Then they exchange a few words. And while the poor woman speaks, "she fidgeted as though the skin on her back were as a plucked fowl's in a poulterer's shop-window." Further on we read:

All she did was to take her glove and rub hard at a spot on the windowpane. She rubbed as if she would rub something out for ever—some stain, some indelible contamination. Indeed, the spot remained for all her rubbing, and back she sank with the shudder and the clutch of the arm I had come to expect. Something impelled me to take my glove and rub my window. There, too, was a little speck on the glass. For all my rubbing it remained. And then the spasm went through me; I crooked my arm and plucked at the middle of my back. My skin, too, felt like the damp chicken's skin in the poulterer's shop-window; one spot between the shoulders itched and irritated, felt clammy, felt raw. . . . But she had communicated, shared her secret, passed her poison.

Still seeking to protect herself, the author begins to fantasy about the life of the woman, filling the next twenty pages with her imaginings. She entitles the story, "An Unwritten Novel," by which she would seem to reveal that the resolution through identification has not been successful. Here we find pictured the urge to identification, as well as the threat to the ego from it, the threat

of being overwhelmed by an exaggerated response to an external stimulus reaching traumatic proportions.

In this ready identification of the artist there remains an element of magic which is conspicuous in the imitativeness of children at play. The tendency quickly to identify is a basic feature of the world of magic. The artist, susceptible to magic to strong degree, is able to charm others so that they in turn feel themselves one with him.

It seems that surrender of the artist to the world is almost always automatically bound up with an attitude of defense and protection, so that the artist never seems to belong completely. It is only this defense attitude which allows him to express his experience in his work. It may very safely be asserted that artists who do not have this defensive attitude become incapable of living or creating. This is true of those artistic natures that succumb early to disease, seek narcotics, resort to drugs, and sooner or later destroy their personalities. In my patient, this defensive attitude was too rigid; she had no freedom of identification, the anxiety was too great, so that her artistic productivity was inhibited.

SUMMARY

Susceptibility to trauma, a strong tendency to identification, narcissism, and bisexuality in the artist are related phenomena.

The basis of the drive to artistic accomplishment lies in a heightened bisexuality. Closely related with this is a traumatophilia, compelling the artist to seek and then overcome the trauma in continual repetition. From the latent frustration develops the artist's fantasy. The urge to identification and expression in work appears as a sublimation of the bisexuality.

The frequency of neurosis in artists may be explained by their heightened bisexuality. They are spared neurosis to the degree that they succeed in overcoming their conflicts through artistic sublimation.

¹ This recalls the Ananke of Greek fate dramas and oracular prophecies.

² Cf. Thomas Mann: "*Es gibt einen Grad dieser Schmerzfähigkeit, der*

jedes Erleben zu einem Erleiden macht." (There is a degree of this capacity to suffer which changes all experience to suffering.); and Richard Wagner: *"Ja immer im Widerstreit sein, nie zur vollsten Ruhe seines Innern zu gelangen, immer gehetzt, gelockt und abgestossen zu sein. . . ."* (Always to be torn with conflict, never to achieve complete tranquility within oneself, always to be hunted, always attracted and repulsed. . . .)

³ Turgenev on Tolstoy: "His deepest, most terrible secret is that he can love no one but himself." Thomas Mann: *"Liebe zu sich selbst ist immer der Anfang eines romanhaften Lebens."* (Love for one's self is always the beginning of living like a character in a novel.) Hebbel: *"Lieben heisst, in dem andern sich selbst erobern."* (To love means to win one's self in the other person.)

OTTO RANK

Life and Creation

*What would live in song immortally
Must in life first perish. . . .*

SCHILLER

BEFORE WE TRACE the rise and significance of this "artist's art," if one may so call it, as it grows out of the primitive art ideologies, it is perhaps desirable to characterize more clearly its essential precondition: namely, the creative personality itself. In spite of all "unconsciousness" in artistic production (a point to which we shall return later), there can be no doubt that the modern individualist type of artist is characterized by a higher degree of consciousness than his earlier prototype: the consciousness not only of his creative work and his artist's mission, but also of his own personality and its productiveness. If, as it should seem, the instinctive will-to-art (Riegl), which creates abstract forms, has in this last stage of artistic development become a conscious will-to-art in the artist, yet the actual process which leads a man to become an artist is usually one of which the individual is not conscious. In other words, the act which we have described as the artist's self-appointment as such is in itself a spontaneous expression of the

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creative impulse, of which the first manifestation is simply the forming of the personality itself. Needless to say, this purely internal process does not suffice to make an artist, let alone a genius, for, as Lange-Eichbaum has said, only the community, one's contemporaries, or posterity can do that. Yet the self-labeling and self-training of an artist is the indispensable basis of all creative work, and without it general recognition could never arise. The artist's lifelong work on his own productive personality appears to run through definite phases, and his art develops in proportion to the success of these phases. In the case of great artists the process is reflected in the fact that they had either a principal or a favorite work, at which they labored all their lives. (Goethe's *Faust*, Rodin's *Porte d'enfer*, Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius, and so on), or a favorite theme, which they never relinquished and which came to be a distinct representation of themselves (as, for example, Rembrandt's self-portraits).

On the other hand, this process of the artist's self-forming and self-training is closely bound up with his life and his experiences. In studying this fundamental problem of the relation between living and creating in an artist, we are therefore again aware of the reciprocal influence of these two spheres. All the psychography and pathography (with its primary concern to explain the one through the other) must remain unsatisfactory as long as the creative impulse, which finds expression equally in experience and in productiveness, is not recognized as the basis of both. For, as I already showed in my essay on Schiller (written in 1905), creativeness lies equally at the root of artistic production and of life experience.¹ That is to say, lived experience can only be understood as the expression of volitional creative impulse, and in this the two spheres of artistic production and actual experience meet and overlap. Then, too, the creative impulse itself is manifested first and chiefly in the personality, which, being thus perpetually made over, produces artwork and experience in the same way. To draw the distinction quite drastically between this new standpoint and earlier ones, one might put it that the artist does not create from his own experience (as Goethe, for instance, so definitely appears to do), but almost in spite of it. For the creative impulse in the artist,

springing from the tendency to immortalize himself, is so powerful that he is always seeking to protect himself against the transient experience, which eats up his ego. The artist takes refuge, with all *his own* experience only from the life of *actuality*, which for him spells mortality and decay, whereas the experience to which he has given shape imposes itself on him as a creation, which he in fact seeks to turn into a work. And although the whole artist psychology may seem to be centered on the "experience," this itself can be explained only through the creative impulse—which attempts to turn ephemeral life into personal immortality. In creation the artist tries to immortalize his mortal life. He desires to transform death into life, as it were, though actually he transforms life into death. For not only does the created work not go on living; it is, in a sense, dead; both as regards the material, which renders it almost inorganic, and also spiritually and psychologically, in that it no longer has any significance for its creator, once he has produced it. He therefore again takes refuge in life, and again forms experiences, which for their part represent only mortality—and it is precisely because they are mortal that he wishes to immortalize them in his work.

The first step toward understanding this mutual relation between life and work in the artist is to gain a clear idea of the psychological significance of the two phenomena. This is only possible, however, on the basis of a constructive psychology of personality, reaching beyond the psychoanalytical conception, which is a therapeutic ideology resting on the biological sex impulse. We have come to see that another factor must be reckoned with besides the original biological duality of impulse and inhibition in man; this is the psychological factor *par excellence*, the individual will, which manifests itself both negatively as a controlling element, and positively as the urge to create. This creator impulse is not, therefore, sexuality, as Freud assumed, but expresses the antisexual tendency in human beings, which we may describe as the deliberate control of the impulsive life. To put it more precisely, I see the creator impulse as the life impulse made to serve the individual will. When psychoanalysis speaks of a sublimated sexual impulse in creative art, meaning thereby the impulse diverted from its

purely biological function and directed toward higher ends, the question as to what diverted and what directed is just being dismissed with an allusion to repression. But repression is a negative factor, which might divert, but never direct. And so the further question remains to be answered: what, originally led to such repression? As we know, the answer to this question was outward deprivation; but that again suggests a merely negative check, and I, for my part, am of the opinion that (at any rate from a certain definite point of individual development) positively willed control takes the place of negative inhibition, and that it is the masterful use of the sexual impulse in the service of this individual will which produces the sublimation.

But even more important for us than these psychological distinctions is the basic problem of why this inhibition occurs at all, and what the deliberate control of the vital impulse means to the individual. Here, again, in opposition to the Freudian conception of an external threat as the cause of the inhibition, I suggest that the internal threatening of the individual through the sexual impulse of the species is at the root of all conflict. Side by side with this self-imposed internal check, which is taken to be what prevents or lessens the development of fear, there stands the will as a positive factor. The various controls which it exercises enable the impulses to work themselves out partially without the individual's falling completely under their influence or having to check them completely by too drastic repression. Thus in the fully developed individual we have to reckon with the triad Impulse-Fear-Will, and it is the dynamic relationship between these factors that determines either the attitude at a given moment or—when equilibrium is established—the type. Unsatisfactory as it may be to express these dynamic processes in terms like "type," it remains the only method of carrying an intelligible idea of them—always assuming that the inevitable simplification in this is not lost sight of. If we compare the neurotic with the productive type, it is evident that the former suffers from an excessive check on his impulsive life, and, according to whether this neurotic checking of the instincts is effected through fear or through will, the picture presented is one of fear-neurosis or compulsion-neurosis. With the

productive type the will dominates, and exercises a far-reaching control over (but not check upon) the instincts, which are pressed into service to bring about creatively a social relief of fear. Finally, the instincts appear relatively unchecked in the so-called psychopathic subject, in whom the will affirms the impulse instead of controlling it. In this type—to which the criminal belongs—we have, contrary to appearances, to do with *weak-willed* people, people who are subjected to their instinctive impulses; the neurotic, on the other hand, is generally regarded as the weak-willed type, but wrongly so, for his strong will is exercised upon himself and, indeed, in the main repressively so it does not show itself.

And here we reach the essential point of difference between the productive type who creates and the thwarted neurotic; what is more, it is also the point from which we get back to our individual artist type. Both are distinguished fundamentally from the average type, who accepts himself as he is, by their tendency to exercise their volition in reshaping themselves. There is, however, this difference: that the neurotic, in this voluntary remaking of his ego, does not get beyond the destructive preliminary work and is therefore unable to detach the whole creative process from his own person and transfer it to an ideological abstraction. The productive artist also begins (as a satisfactory psychological understanding of the “will-to-style” has obliged us to conclude) with that re-creation of himself which results in an ideologically constructed ego; this ego is then in a position to shift the creative will power from his own person to ideological representations of that person and thus to render it objective. It must be admitted that this process is in a measure limited to within the individual himself, and that not only in its constructive, but also in its destructive, aspects. This explains why hardly any productive work² gets through without morbid crises of a “neurotic” nature; it also explains why the relation between productivity and illness has so far been unrecognized or misinterpreted, as, for instance, in Lombroso’s theory of the insanity of genius. Today this theory appears to us as the precipitate left by the old endeavors to explain genius on rational psychological lines, which treated such features as depart from the normal as “pathological.” However much in

the Italian psychiatrist's theory is an exaggeration of the materialism of nineteenth century science, yet undeniably it had a startling success, and this I attribute to the fact that genius itself, in its endeavor to differentiate itself from the average, has probably dramatized its pathological features also. But the psychologist should beware of deducing from this apparent factor any conclusions as to the production or total personality, without taking into account the feeling of guilt arising from the creative process itself; for this is capable of engendering a feeling of inferiority as a secondary result, even though the primary result may be a conviction of superiority. As I have said elsewhere, the fundamental problem is *individual difference*, which the ego is inclined to interpret as inferiority unless it can be proved by achievement to be superiority.

Even psychoanalysis in its turn did not succeed in surmounting Lombroso's materialist theory of insanity or supplementing his rational explanation by a spiritual one. All it did was to substitute neurosis for insanity (which was at bottom Lombroso's own meaning), thus tending either to identify the artist with the neurotic—this is particularly the case in Sadger's and Stekel's arguments—or to explain the artist on the basis of an inferiority feeling. (Alfred Adler and his school took the latter view.)³ It is characteristic that during the last few years the psychiatrists (such as Lange-Eichbaum, Kretschmer, Plaut) who have contributed most toward clearing up the position of genius are precisely those who have managed to keep clear of the one-sidedness of these psychoanalytical schools. And if these researches have not made any important contribution to the understanding of the process of creating, psychoanalysis, even in its exaggerations, must at least be credited with having discovered that experience, in so far as it is the antithesis of production, embraces not only the relations of love and friendship, but also those morbid reactions of a psychic and bodily nature which are known as "neurotic." A real understanding of these neurotic illnesses could not, however, be satisfactorily obtained as long as we tried to account for them in the Freudian sense by thwarted sexuality. What was wanted in addition was a grasp of the general problem of fear and of the will psychology going therewith which should allow for the exercise of the will, both

constructively and destructively, affecting the ego and the work equally. Only through the will-to-self-immortalization, which rises from the fear of life, can we understand the interdependence of production and suffering and the definite influence of this on positive experience. This does not preclude production being a creative development of a neurosis in objective form; and, on the other hand, a neurotic collapse may follow as a reaction after production, owing either to a sort of exhaustion or to a sense of guilt arising from the power of creative masterfulness as something arrogant.⁴

Reverting now from the production process to experience, it does not take long to perceive that experience is the expression of the impulse ego, production of the will ego. The external difficulties in an artist's experience appear, in this sense, but as manifestations of this internal dualism of impulse and will, and in the creative type it is the latter which eventually gains the upper hand. Instinct presses in the direction of experience and, in the limit, to consequent exhaustion—in fact, death—while will drives to creation and thus to immortalization. On the other hand, the productive type also pays toll to life by his work and to death by bodily and spiritual sufferings of a “neurotic” order; and conversely in many cases the product of a type that is at bottom neurotic may be his sole propitiatory offering to Life. It is with reason, therefore, that from the beginning two basic types of artist have been distinguished; these have been called at one time Dionysian and Apollonian, and at another Classical and Romantic.⁵ In terms of our present dynamic treatment, the one approximates to the psychopathic-impulsive type, the other to the compulsion-neurotic volitional type. The one creates more from fullness of powers and sublimation, the other more from exhaustion and compensation. The work of the one is entire in every single expression, that of the other is partial even in its totality, for the one lives itself out, positively, in the work, while the other pays with the work—pays, not to society (for both do that), but to life itself, from which the one strives to win freedom by self-willed creation whereas for the other the thing created is the expression of life itself.

This duality within one and the same type is of outstanding

significance in the psychology of the productive type and in the work it produces. For, while in the two classes of neurotics (frustrated by fear and by the will respectively) the form of the neurosis is of minor matter compared with the fact of breaking down the inhibition itself, by the curative process of dynamic equilibration, in the productive type the dynamism itself determines not only the kind but the form of his art. But this highly complicated problem is only mentioned here with a view to discussion later, and we will turn from the two artist types, which Müller-Freienfels, in his *Psychologie der Kunst* (Vol. II, pp. 100 *et seq.*) characterizes as "expressive artists" and "formative artists," back to the problem of experience which is common to both. This problem, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, only becomes intelligible through the conception of immortality. There appears to be a common impulse in all creative types to replace collective immortality—as it is represented biologically in sexual propagation—by the individual immortality of deliberate self-perpetuation. This is, however, a relatively late stage of development in the conception of immortality, after it has already become individualized—a stage preceded by attempts to create conceptions of collective immortality, of which the most important is religion. I have tried in another connection ⁶ to show how, within religious development itself, the idea of the collective soul was gradually transformed into the idea of the individual god, whose heir the artist later became. The initial conception of an individual god, subsequently to be humanized in the genius, had itself been helped on, and perhaps even only rendered possible, by art. But there was an early stage of artistic development, which was at the same time the climax of religious development, in which the individual artist played no part because creative power was still the prerogative of the god.

The individual artist, whose growth from the creative conception of a god has been sketched out, no longer uses the collective ideology of religion to perpetuate himself, but the personal religion of genius, which is the precondition of any productions by the individual artist type. And so we have *primitive art*, the expression of a collective ideology, perpetuated by abstraction which has found its *religious* expression in the idea of the soul; *Classical art*,

based on a *social* art concept, perpetuated by *idealization*, which has found its purest expression in the conception of beauty; and, lastly, *modern art*, based on the concept of individual genius and perpetuated by *concretization*, which has found its clearest expression in the personality cult of the artistic individuality itself. Here, then, in contrast to the primitive stage, it is the artist and not art that matters, and naturally therefore the experience of the individual takes on the significance characteristic of the romantic artist type.⁷ Here, obviously, not only do we see the tendency—in our view the basic tendency—of the artist type to put oneself and one's life into one's creative work; but we see also how, in the eyes of this type, the problem of the relation between experience and creation⁸ has become an artistic (aesthetic) one; whereas it is really only a psychological one, which discloses, indeed, important points of contact with art (considered as an ideological conception), but differs from it in essence.

For the romantic dualism of life and production, which manifests itself as a mixture of both spheres, has, as a typical conflict within the modern individual, nothing to do with art, although obliged like art to express itself creatively. This romantic dualism of life and creation, which corresponds to our psychological dualism of impulse and will, is, in the last resort, the conflict between collective and individual immortality, in which we have all suffered so acutely since the decay of religion and the decline of art. The romantic type, flung hither and thither between the urge to perpetuate his own life by creating and the compulsion to turn himself and life into a work of art, thus appears as the last representative of an art ideology which, like the religious collective ideology, is in process of dying out. This does not prevent this final attempt to rescue the semicollective "religion of genius" by taking it into modern individualism from bringing forth outstanding and permanently valuable works of art; perhaps, indeed (as Nietzsche himself, the ultra-Romantic, recognized), it requires that it should. On the other hand, it is just the appearance of this decadent type of artist which marks the beginning of a new development of personality, since the tendency to self-perpetuation is in the end transferred to the ego from which it originally sprang.

On this issue the romantic becomes identical, as a psychological type, with the neurotic—this is not a valuation, but merely a statement of fact—and for that matter the comparison may even be reversed, since the neurotic likewise has creative, or, at least, self-creative, forces at command. We can thus understand the experience problem of the individualist type of artist also only by studying the nature of neurosis, just as the therapy of the neurotic requires an understanding of the creative type.⁹ Now, the neurotic represents the individual who aims at self-preservation by restricting his experience, thus showing his adherence to the naïve faith in immortality of the primitive, though without the collective soul ideology which supports that faith. The productivity of the individual, or of the thing created, replaces—for the artist as for the community—the originally religious ideology by a social value; that is, the work of art not only immortalizes the artist ideologically instead of personally, but also secures to the community a future life in the collective elements of the work. Even at this last stage of individual art creativity there function ideologies (whether given or chosen) of an aesthetic, a social, or a psychological nature as collective justifications of the artist's art, in which the personal factor makes itself more and more felt and appreciated.

If the impulse to create productively is explicable only by the conception of immortality, the question of the experience problem of the neurotic has its source in failure of the impulse to perpetuate, which results in fear, but is also probably conditioned by it. There is (as I have shown) a double sort of fear: on the one hand the fear of life which aims at avoidance or postponement of death, and on the other the fear of death which underlies the desire for immortality. According to the compromise which men make between these two poles of fear, and the predominance of one or the other form, there will be various dynamic solutions of this conflict, which hardly permit of description by type labeling. For, in practice, both in the neurotic and in the productive type—the freely producing and the thwarted—all the forces are brought into play, though with varying accentuation and periodical balancing of values. In general, a strong preponderance of the fear of life will lead rather to neurotic repression, and the fear of death to produc-

tion—that is, perpetuation in the work produced. But the fear of life, from which we all suffer, conditions the problem of experience in the productive type as in other people, just as the fear of death whips up the neurotic's constructive powers. The individual whose life is braked is led thereby to flee from experience, because he fears that he will become completely absorbed in it—which would mean death—and so is bound up with fear. Unlike the productive type, who strives to be deathless through his work, the neurotic does not seek immortality in any clearly defined sense, but in primitive fashion as a naïve saving or accumulation of actual life. But even the individualist artist type must sacrifice both life and experience to make art out of them. Thus we see that what the artist needs for true creative art in addition to his technique and a definite ideology is life in one form or another; and the two artist types differ essentially in the source from which they take this life that is so essential to production. The Classical type, who is possibly poorer within, but nearer to life, and himself more vital, takes it from without: that is, he creates immortal work from mortal life without necessarily having first transformed it into personal experience as is the case with the Romantic. For, to the Romantic, experience of his own appears to be an essential preliminary to productivity, although he does not use this experience for the enrichment of his own personality, but to economize the personal experiences, the burden of which he would fain escape. Thus the one artist type constantly makes use of life other than his own—in fact, nature—for the purpose of creating, while the other can create only by perpetually sacrificing his own life. This essential difference of attitude to the fundamental problem of life throws a psychological light on the contrast in styles of various periods in art. Whatever æsthetic designation may be applied to this contrast, from the spiritual point of view the work of the Classicist, more or less naturalistic, artist is essentially *partial*, and the work of the Romantic, produced from within, *total*.¹⁰ This totality type spends itself perpetually in creative work without absorbing very much of life, while the partial type has continually to absorb life so that he may throw it off again in his work. It is an egoistical artist type of this order that Ibsen has described in so masterly a

fashion. He needs, as it were, for each work that he builds, a sacrifice which is buried alive to ensure a permanent existence to the structure, but also to save the artist from having to give himself. The frequent occasions when a great work of art has been created in the reaction following upon the death of a close relation seem to me to realize those favorable cases for this type of artist in which he can dispense with the killing of the building's victim because that victim has died a natural death and has subsequently, to all appearances, had a monument piously erected to him.¹¹

The mistake in all modern psychological biography lies in its attempt to "explain" the artist's work by his experience, whereas creation can be made understandable only through the inner dynamism and its central problems. Then, too, the real artist regards his work as more important than the whole of life and experience, which are but a means to production—almost, indeed, a by-product of it. This refers, however, to the Classical type only, for to the Romantic type his personal ego and his experience are more important than, or as important as, his work; sometimes, indeed, production may be simply a means to life, just as to the other type experience is but a means to production. This is why Romantic art is far more subjective, far more closely bound up with experience, than Classical, which is more objective and linked to life. In no case, however, will the individual become an artist through any *one* experience, least of all through the experiences of childhood (which seem pretty universal). The becoming of the artist has a particular genesis, one of the manifestations of which may be some special experience. For the artistic impulse to create is a dynamic factor apart from the content of experience, a will problem which the artist solves in a particular way. That is, he is capable of forming the given art ideology—whether of the collective kind (style) or the personal (genius idea)—into the substance of his creative will. He employs, so to say, personal will power to give form or life to an ideology, which must have not only social qualities like other ideologies, but purely artistic ones, which will be more closely specified from the point of view of æsthetics.

The subjective character of modern art, which is based on the ideology of a personal type of artist, imposes also a special outlook

in the artist toward his own creative power and his work. The more production is an essential means to life (and not just a particular ideological expression of it), the more will the work itself be required to justify the personality—instead of expressing it—and the more will this subjective artist type need individuals to justify his production. From this point of view as well as others it is easy to see that experience, in its particular form of love experience, takes on a peculiar significance for the Romantic artist, whose art is based on the personality cult of the genius concept. The primitive artist type finds his justification in the work itself; the Classical justifies the work by his life, but the Romantic must justify both life and experience by his work and, further, must have a witness of his life to justify his production. The fundamental problem of the Romantic artist is thus the self-justification of the individual raised above the crowd, while the Classical artist type expresses himself in his work—which receives a social justification by way of general recognition. But the Romantic needs, further, whether as contrast or as supplement to this social approval, a personal approbation of his own, because his feeling of the guilt of creation can no longer be allayed by a collective ideology any more than he can work effectively in the service of such an ideology. In this sense his artistic work is rather a forcible liberation from inward pressure than the voluntary expression of a fundamentally strong personality that is capable of paralyzing the subjective element to a great extent by making collective symbolism his own. The artist who approximates more nearly to the Classical type excels less, therefore, in the creating of new forms than in perfecting them. Further, he will make much more frequent use of old traditional material, full of a powerful collective resonance, as the content of his work, while the Romantic seeks new forms and contents in order to be able to express his personal self more completely.

Thus, as the artist type becomes more and more individualized, he appears on the one hand to need a more individual ideology—the genius concept—for his art, while on the other his work is more subjective and more personal, until finally he requires for the justification of his production an individual “public” also: a

single person for whom ostensibly he creates. This goes so far in a certain type of artist, which we call the Romantic, that actual production is possible only with the aid of a concrete Muse through whom or for whom the work is produced. The "experience" which arises in this manner is not, like other sorts of experience, an external phenomenon set over against creative work, but is a part of it and even identical with it, always providing that the Muse—in practice, usually a real woman—is suited to this role or at least makes no objection to it, and so long as the artist can maintain such a relation on the ideological plane without confusing it with real life. It is this case, in which the conflict between life and creation reaches extreme intensity, that we so often see actualized in the modern type of artist. Here the woman is expected to be Muse and mistress at once, which means that she must justify equally the artistic ego, with its creativeness, and the real self, with its life; and this she seldom (and in any case only temporarily) succeeds in doing. We see the artist of this type working off on the woman his inward struggle between life and production or, psychologically speaking, between impulse and will. It is a tragic fate that he shares with the neurotic, who suffers from the same inner conflict. Another way out of the struggle is to divide its elements between two persons, of whom one belongs to the ideological creative sphere, and the other to the sphere of actual life. But this solution also presents difficulties of a psychological as well as a social order, because this type of artist has a fundamental craving for totality, in life as in work, and the inner conflict, though it may be temporarily eased by being objectivized in such an outward division of roles, is as a whole only intensified thereby.

The same applies to another solution of this ego conflict which the artist has in common with the neurotic, and one which shows more clearly even than the complicated love conflict that it is at bottom a question not of sexual but of creative problems. From the study of a certain class of neurotic we have found that in many cases of apparent homosexual conflicts it is less a sexual perversion than an ego problem that underlies them, a problem with which the individual can only deal by personifying a portion of his own ego in another individual. The same applies, it is true, to

heterosexual love relations, from which the homosexual differs only in that the selfward part of this relation is stronger, or at any rate more distinct. If the poet values his Muse the more highly in proportion as it can be identified with his artistic personality and its ideology, then self-evidently he will find his truest ideal in an even greater degree in his own sex, which is in any case physically and intellectually closer to him. Paradoxical as it may sound, the apparently homosexual tendencies or actual relationships of certain artists fulfill the craving for a Muse which will stimulate and justify creative work in a higher degree than (for a man) a woman can do. It is only as the result of the artist's urge for completion, and his desire to find everything united in one person, that it is mostly a woman that is taken as, or made into, a Muse, although instances of homosexual relations between artists are by no means rare.

Greece, in particular, with its high development of purely intellectual ideologies in art and philosophy, was of course the classical country of boy love; and there is nothing contradictory in this, particularly if we understand the boy friendship in the Greek spirit.¹² For it was in the main, or at least collaterally, a high spiritual relation which had as its basis and object a "pedagogic" training for the boy. The master—whether philosopher or sculptor, or, in other words, artist in living or in shaping—was not content to teach his pupil or protégé his doctrines or his knowledge: he had the true artistic impulse to transform him into his own image, to create. And this, by the way, was the form of personal immortality characteristic of Greek culture at its height, which not only found expression in works of art or spiritual teaching, but sought fulfillment in a personal, concrete successor. This successor was no longer (or not yet, if we think of Rome) the physical son, but the like-minded pupil. This is why the spiritual relation of pupil-and-master—which Christianity was to set up again as the center of its doctrine of life—has remained a more important thing to the creative artist than the juridical father-and-son relation which psychoanalysis seeks to regard as fundamental, whereas it is spiritually of a secondary order. And in Greece, therefore, the state of being a pupil did not mean the mere acquiring of a certain discipline

and the mastery of a certain material knowledge, as in the civilization of father right, but the forming of a personality—which begins by identification with the master and is then “artistically” developed and perfected on the pupil’s own lines. In this sense the Greek was creative before he arrived at creating works of art, or, indeed, without ever shaping anything but himself and his pupil. Socrates is the best known of many examples of this.

This educative ideology of the artistic Greek nation, which is manifested also in boy love in all its aspects, brings up the question: did that Greek art, which may seem to us today the main achievement of the Greek civilization, perhaps represent to the Greek a mere by-product thereof, an auxiliary, in fact, to the education of the men, who as the real vessels of the culture were thus enabled *inter alia* to practice art for its own sake? This brings us to another question: was not every great art, whether of primitive or cultivated peoples, bound up with some such cultured task, which lies beyond the bounds of æsthetics, but also beyond all individual artist psychology? In any case, there are numerous literary proofs of the high degree to which the Greeks were conscious of this national importance of their art. They said that men should learn from works of art and try themselves to become as beautiful and perfect as the statues around them. This gives us an insight into the characteristic way in which the Greeks extended their own creation of individual personalities to include a whole nation, which was not content to produce works of art for their own sake but strove to create an artistic human type who would also be able to produce fine works of art. Seen in this light, boy love, which, as Plato tells us, aimed perpetually at the improvement and perfection of the beloved youth, appears definitely as the Classical counterpart of the primitive body art on a spiritualized plane. In the primitive stage it is a matter of physical self-enhancement; in the civilized stage, a spiritual perfecting in the other person, who becomes transferred into the worthy successor of oneself here on earth; and that, not on the basis of the biological procreation of one’s body, but in the sense of the spiritual immortality symbolism in the pupil, the younger.

Christianity took over this ideal of personal character forma-

tion in the symbol of the Exemplar Master, but, in proportion as it became a world-wide religion of the masses, it was unable to carry it out at the personal level. The collective immortality dogma, which became symbolized in Christ, relieved the individual of this task of personal self-creation; Christ instead was no longer a model, but became a victim who took upon himself voluntarily the development of everyone's personality. Correspondingly, Christian art remained stationary in the abstract collective style of the religious ideology, until in the Renaissance it was freed by the emergence of a new type of personality. It was not mere imitation of Classical Greece, but the expression of a similar ideology of personality that led the artists of the Renaissance to try to re-experience the Greek ideal of boy love. We see, for instance, two of the really great artists, of entirely different social environment, expressing the identical spiritual ideology, with such far-reaching similarity that the notion that the mere accident of a personal experience produced both cases must be dismissed. They both, Michelangelo and Shakspeare, found almost identical words in their famous sonnets for the noble love which each of them felt for a beautiful youth who was his friend. Michelangelo's case is the simpler in that we at least think we know to whom his sonnets were addressed, although it might equally well be the short-lived Ceccino Bracchi or Tommaso de Cavalieri, the object of a lifelong adoration. It is not even clear in some of his later sonnets whether his "idol" refers to his young friend or to Vittoria Colonna, whose platonic friendship came later. The content of Shakspeare's sonnets is a far more complicated matter. His ideal has been sought among the widely differing persons among the aristocracy of his day. His adoring friendship for the youth in question was not, as with Michelangelo, followed by a soothing maternal friendship, but was broken in upon by a young and beautiful woman. Here, as in his dramas also, woman figures as an evil, disturbing dæmon that the Elizabethan dramatist never succeeded in transforming into a helpful Muse, but always felt to be an obstacle to creative work; whereas in his young friend he found the ideal which spurred him on and aided him. But whatever the decision reached by zealous scholars concerning the identity of the

person addressed in his immortal sonnets, this "biographical" fact seems to me unimportant as compared with the psychological evidence that this glorification of a friend is, fundamentally, self-glorification just as was the Greek boy-love. In this sense, not only are the sonnets in fact self-dedicated—as is creative work of every description—but they reveal that peculiar attitude of the creative instinct toward the creative ego which seeks to glorify it by artistic idealization and at the same time to overcome its mortality by eternalizing it in art.

The fact that an idealized self-glorification in the person of another can take on physical forms, as in the Greek boy-love, has actually nothing to do with the sex of the beloved, but is concerned only with the struggle to develop a personality and the impulse to create which arises from it. This impulse is at bottom directed to the creator's own rebirth in the closest possible likeness, which is naturally more readily found in his own sex; the other sex is felt to be biologically a disturbing element except where it can be idealized as a Muse. But the likeness to himself will not only be found in the bodily form of his own sex, but also be built up with regard to the spiritual affinity, and in this regard the youthfulness of the beloved stands for the bodily symbol of immortality. In this manner does the mature man, whose impulse to perpetuate himself drives him away from the biological sex life, live his own life over again in his youthful love; not only seeking to transform him into his intellectual counterpart, but making him his spiritual ideal, the symbol of his vanishing youth. The sonnets of both the Renaissance artists are full of such laments over the vanishing youth of the beloved, whose glorious picture it is the duty of the poem to preserve to all eternity. Just as we know, from the psychology of the creative genius, that his impulse to create arises from precisely this tendency to immortalize himself in his work, so we can be in no doubt as to whose transitoriness it is that the poet deplores with almost monotonous reiteration. In these sonnets there is so complete a revelation of the meaning and content of the whole output of their authors, and indeed of the nature of the artist's creative instinct in general, that their high valuation and, no less, their intriguing ambiguity, become comprehensible. Yet they are

easy to understand if we regard them as the subjective completion of their author's objective creations, for in their naïve self-projection they admit their own transitoriness to be the reason for their own perpetuation in poetry.

From this point of view, then, the biographical presentation, even when it can be done with certainty, seems to us inessential. We are by no means cast down when this method fails, for we can understand that beyond a certain point failure is unavoidable, since the creation of a work of art cannot be explained even by the reconstruction of an inspirer. Thus the factual and concrete biography of Michelangelo or Shakspeare does not enable us to understand their work the better; rather we are left more amazed than before at their coincidence. Vasari, anyhow, declares that the one and only portrait by Michelangelo which was true to nature was that of his young friend Tommaso Cavalieri, "for he detested copying the actual appearance of anyone who was not completely beautiful." The same ideal fashion in which he immortalizes the beloved in poetry corresponds exactly with Shakspeare's attitude to *his* ideal. For the English poet also has the conscious intention of immortalizing his friend's beauty at least in his verse, if time is bound to destroy his bodiliness. This is the constantly reiterated theme in the Shakspeare sonnets, and Michelangelo had the same feeling in the presence of the beloved youth: that his beauty should be incorporated into eternity. Not only is it evident from this self-immortalization in the work that the matter is at bottom one of self-immortalization expressed in another (in the ideal) but both these artists have expressed with great clearness, and to the point of monotony, the idea of oneness with the friend. Shakspeare says:

What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?

(Sonnet XXXIX); and Michelangelo in one of his sonnets not only says that a lover "transforms himself" into the beloved, but in a letter presses this transformation of the beloved into his own image, so far as to call his friend Tommaso "a genius who is a stranger in this world."¹³

This psychological solution of the much-disputed sonnet prob-

lem shows how experience, and still more the whole attitude toward life, grows out of the struggle to create and so reduces the problem of experience to the problem of creativity. For the extent to which the the artist succeeds in actualizing his love ideal, in the service of his own self-immortalization, is of minor importance compared with the basic attitude that his work discloses—namely, one originating in dissatisfaction with artistic creation and so urging the creator in some form or other toward life—that is, toward the actual experiencing of his fundamental self. In any case his impulse to form man in his own image or in the image of his ideal inevitably brings him into conflict with real life and its conditions. These conditions are not artistic, but social, conditions, in which one individual has to respect another and is not permitted to remake him. Now, a certain measure of conflict is, of course, necessary to creative work, and this conflict is, in fact, one of the fields in which an artist displays his greatness, or, psychologically speaking, the strength of his creative will power. By means of it he is able to work off a certain measure of his inner conflict in his art without entirely sacrificing the realities of life or coming into factual conflict with them. In any case, the destructive results of this ensemble of realities upon the neurotic, as we are able to observe them in his neurosis, show that what distinguishes him from the artist is that the latter constructively applies his will power in the service of *ideological* creation. A certain type of artist, for whom Goethe may stand as the model, will learn to deal with his experiences and conflicts economically and in the end wisely, while another type exhausts his strength in chasing after stimulating experiences so that his conflict does not come out in production. For the artist himself the fact *that* he creates is more immediately important than *what* he produces, although we are inclined to make his classification as a particular type depend upon the result, his artwork. Here again we find ourselves at a point where art as the result of production must be sharply differentiated from the artist as a creative individual. There is, in fact, no norm for the artist as a type, although we are constantly tempted to set up more or less precisely formulated norms both for art and for the individual work of art. Production is a vital

process which happens within the individual and is independent at the outset from the ideology manifested in the created work. On the other hand, the work can show an equal independence toward the artist who has created it, and can in favorable instances be compared with other works within the categories of art; but it can never be compared with its author or with the artist as a psychological type. Between the two—artist and art—there stands Life, now dividing, now uniting, now checking, now promoting.

Here we must return once more to the relation of the artist to woman (or to the opposite sex). In the life of many an artist this is a disturbing factor, one of the deepest sources of conflict, indeed, when it tends to force or beguile him into closer touch with life than is necessary or even advantageous to his production. To make a woman his Muse, or to name her as such, therefore, often amounts to transforming a hindrance into a helper—a compromise which is usually in the interest of productiveness, but renders no service to life. Here, again, everything naturally depends on the artist's dynamic type and his specific conflict over life and production. There are artists for whom even a feminine Muse represents nothing but a potential homosexual relation; for they see in her not so much the woman as a comrade of like outlook and like aims, who could equally well—and possibly better—be replaced by a male friendship. On the other hand, there is an artist type which is totally unable to produce at all without the biological complement of the other sex and indeed depends directly on the sexual life for its stimulus. For the type which is creative in and by means of sexual abstinence has its opposite in another type which, strange to say, is not only not exhausted by the sexual act but is definitely stimulated to create thereby. Schulte-Vaerting has described this type as the "sexual superman," but it seems to me rather that here too some hidden mechanism of fleeing from life is involved, which impels the artist from biological mortality to individual immortality in production after he has paid his tribute to sexuality.

This leads us to the profoundest source of the artistic impulse to create, which I can only satisfactorily explain to myself as the

struggle of the individual against an inherent striving after totality, which forces him equally in the direction of a complete surrender to life and a complete giving of himself in production. He has to save himself from this totality by fleeing, now from the Scylla of life, now from the Charybdis of creation, and his escape is naturally accomplished only at the cost of continual conflict, both between these two spheres and within each of them separately. How this conflict and the triumph over it is manifested in creative working I seek to show elsewhere. For the moment we are dealing only with manifestations and attempted solutions within the sphere of life, irrespective of whether these are concerned with persons of the same or of the opposite sex. In every case the artist's relation to woman has more of an ideological than of a sexual significance, as Emil Lenk has demonstrated in a study on creative personalities (*Das Liebesleben des Genies*, 1926). Usually, however, he needs two women, or several, for the different parts of his conflict, and accordingly he falls into psychological dilemmas, even if he evades the social difficulties. He undoubtedly loves both these persons in different ways, but is usually not clear as to the part they play, even if—as would appear to be the rule—he does not actually confuse them one with the other. Because the Muse means more to him artistically, he thinks he loves her the more. This is seldom the case in fact, and moreover it is psychologically impossible. For the other woman, whom, from purely human or other motives, he perhaps loves more, he often enough cannot set up as his Muse for this very reason: that she would thereby become in a sense de-feminized and, as it were, made into an object (in the egocentric sense) of friendship. To the Muse for whom he creates (or thinks he creates), the artist seldom gives himself; he pays with his work, and this the truly womanly woman often refuses to accept. But if his relation takes a homosexual form, this giving is still more obviously a giving to himself; that is, the artistic form of giving through production instead of surrendering the personal ego.

True, from the standpoint of the ego, the homosexual relation is an idealizing of oneself in the person of another, but at the same time it is felt as a humiliation; and this is not so much the

cause as the actual expression of internal conflicts. For, in the dynamism which leads him to create, the artist suffers from a struggle between his higher and his lower self which manifests itself equally in all the spheres and utterances of his life and also characterizes his attitude to woman. She can be for him at once the symbol of the highest and the lowest, of the mortal and the immortal soul, of life or of death. The same applies too, as we shall see, to the work itself or to creation, for which the artist is prepared to sacrifice everything, but which, in the hour of disappointment and dejection, he frequently damns and curses. There is in the artist that fundamental dualism from which we all suffer, intensified in him to a point which drives him with dynamic compulsion from creative work to life, and from life back to new and other creativity. According to the artist's personal structure and spiritual ideology, this conflict will take the form of a struggle between good and evil, beauty and truth, or, in a more neurotic way, between the higher and the lower self. It is a struggle which, as we shall presently see, determines the cultural genetic start and development of the creative instinct itself. In the personal conflicts of the individual artist the fundamental dualism which originally led to cultural development and artistic creation persists in all its old strength. It cannot, however, be reconstructed and understood as a matter of individual psychology from an analysis of the artist's personal past, because the modern individual not only comes into the world with humanity's fundamental dualism, but is also potentially charged with all the attempts to solve it, so that his personal development no longer provides any parallels with the development of the race.

For if we inquire into the relation between work and production in the artist, we must bear in mind that there are two kinds of experience, just as there are at least two ways of artistic production. Whereas in preanalytical biography it was chiefly the artist's later and proportionately more active experience that was brought into relation with his creativeness, psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on the decisive importance of infantile impressions, brought this more passive stage of experience into the foreground. This conception got no further, however, than the banal statement

that even the artist was not immune from those typical experiences of childhood which one had come up against in analyzing the adult. Just as Freud saw the cause of neurosis in these typical childhood experiences themselves and not in the individual's particular reaction to them, so did his school claim to see in those same childhood impressions the experiences which led to artistic creativity, though without being able to explain the difference between one outcome of them and another. An inexplicable "remainder" had therefore to be admitted, but this remainder embraced no more and no less than the whole problem of artistic creativity. Beyond this statement analytical psychography has to this day not progressed, as the latest comprehensive publication in this province shows.¹⁴ And although the Oedipus complex, and the sexual problem of the child that is bound up with it, still forms the center, this is rather the sign of a fatal stoppage than a proof of the superlative importance of this family problem. The whole of analytical pathography has battened for more than a quarter of a century on the Oedipus problem, which was first applied to artistic creation by Freud (in his *Interpretation of Dreams*), without, however, reaching even the point at which I came out when I published my book: *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage* (1912, planned in 1905), to which I gave the subtitle: *Grundzüge einer Psychologie des dichterischen Schaffens*.

In this book, as already mentioned, the Oedipus problem is treated mainly as a motive and only in a minor degree as an individual complex; hence its ideological significance was considered as well as its psychological. Although, under the spell of the Freudian idea, I gave pride of place to the individual as against the collective psychology (which I have since learned to appreciate as "ideology,"¹⁵) yet with respect to the latter, too, I certainly did not steer clear of psychological premises in dealing with this collective motive which we find in myth and saga before the poets made a theme of it. But, be this as it may, the book has even now not been superseded; indeed, analytical art criticism has not yet put itself in face of its problems—to which I must at this point return. That the poets struggled so intensely with the Oedipus complex was regarded at the time as a proof of its ubiquity, and so it actually was so far as

concerned individual psychology. But from the standpoint of the psychology of artistic production, the poets' wrestling with the Oedipus experience seems to me to mean something essentially different: namely, that the artist reacts more strongly than, and certainly in a different way from, the normal person to this unavoidable average experience of the parental relation. This is not, however, because of the experience, but because of his peculiar reactivity, which in the case of artistic expression we call "creative." Now, from the comparison that I drew in my generalized formulation of "the artist" (also in 1905) between artist and neurotic, it results that the latter also reacts differently from the average person to these and similar experiences. Only, this distinctive reaction does not, with him, lead to production, but to inhibition or to fixation. The artistic reaction is thus distinguishable from the neurotic by an *overcoming of the trauma* or of the potentiality of inhibition resulting therefrom, no matter whether this is achieved by a single effort or is spread over the whole lifework. This overcoming, however (so far as my researches have taken me), is only possible—or at any rate only psychologically explicable—in one way, and this, as we have learned from the therapy which helps to overcome these development inhibitions, is through volitional affirmation of the obligatory, which in every case not only works usefully, but is also definitely creative. Applied to the special case of the Oedipus conflict, it appears to me today that it is the willed affirmation of the inhibitive family ties that is the creative and at the same time liberating factor. But this affirmation of the given, which in relation to family symbols manifests itself as erotic desire (toward mother and sister) and thirst for battle (with father or brother), corresponds on the one hand to creative appropriation and on the other to a constructive victory over it.

And with this we are back again at the fundamental process of artistic production, which consists in just this deliberate appropriation of that which happens and is given (including passive experiences) in the form of individual new creation. The Oedipus complex forms one of the cultural symbols of this conflict because it synthesizes the biological, psychological, and characterological sides of it. But, even so, it only symbolizes—even in the case of a child, for

whom the Oedipus complex is already the expression of an inner experience and not merely adaptation to an outward destiny. It even seems to me as if the Oedipus myth itself, if taken in the Greek spirit,¹⁶ were an experience of this same striving for independence in human development: namely, the deliberate affirmation of the existence forced on us by fate. That which is dimly but unequivocally preordained for the hero by his birth, in the mythical account, he deliberately makes his own by embodying it in action and experience. This experience is a creative experience, for it serves to create the myth itself, and the sagas, poems, and tragedies based on it, whose various representations of the one theme are determined by the collective ideological outlook of the moment and the interpretation appropriate thereto. But the life of the individual hero himself will inevitably be destroyed, whether this human destiny be interpreted in terms of heroism, fatalism, or tragedy.

¹ *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage* (chap. III, XVI). I found the same conception later in Simmel's *Goethe*.

² This applies not only to most artists, but also, as Wilhelm Ostwald for one has convincingly proved, to the scientific creative type (*Grosse Männer*).

³ A characteristic instance of how, in avoiding the Scylla of Lombroso, one may fall a victim to the Charybdis of analytical psychology is afforded by Victor Jonsco's book: *La Personnalité du génie artiste*, which I read only after the completion of my own work. A praiseworthy exception is Bernard Grasset's original essay: *Psychologie de l'immortalité*.

⁴ How this feeling of guilt can hinder or, on the other hand, further productivity I have shown in my book: *Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit* (1929) in the section on the sense of guilt in creation.

⁵ E. von Sydow distinguishes these polar opposites, from the standpoint of æsthetic, as "eros-dominated" and "eros-dominating."

⁶ *Seelenglaube und Psychologie* (1930).

⁷ What interests us today in Byron, for instance, is his romantic life, and not his out-of-date poetry.

⁸ See W. Dilthey's book, *Erlebnis und Dichtung*. The artist personalities examined there in relation to this problem are, as is natural, chiefly romantic types (Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin).

⁹ This is a point of view which I endeavored to present in my last technical work: *Die Analyse des Analytikers und seine Rolle in der Gesamtsituation* (1931).

¹⁰ These types, evolved from a study of psychological dynamics (see my *Die Analyse des Analytikers*), are, as I have since discovered, accepted as the essential key concepts of all polar contrasts of style by P. Frankl in his *Entwicklungsphasen der neuen Baukunst*. True, Frankl's work is not lim-

ited merely to architecture, but more narrowly still to the contrast in style between Renaissance and Baroque. We shall presently see, however ("*Schönheit und Wahrheit*"), that this contrast between totality and partiality is a general spiritual distinction between the Classical-naturalistic and the primitive-abstract styles.

¹¹ Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Mozart's *Don Juan* are familiar examples of the reaction after a father's death, while Wagner's *Lohengrin* followed on the death of the composer's mother. These works are supreme examples of artists negotiating with the problem of the Beyond. To these instances may be added Ibsen's epilogue *When We Dead Awaken*; here the death is that of the artist himself.

¹² See my account in *Modern Education* (1932), pp. 24-26.

¹³ The references are taken from Emil Lucka's book on Michelangelo (1930).

¹⁴ *Die psychoanalytische Bewegung*, Vol. II, No. 4 (July-August 1930) (also contains a bibliography of psychoanalytical biography). In his introduction Dr. E. Hitschmann describes my book on the Incest-Motiv as fundamental for the analytical survey of art and the understanding of artistic creativity.

¹⁵ *Seelenglaube und Psychologie* (1930).

¹⁶ See my explanations in *Die analytische Reaktion* (1929), pp. 68 ff., and also in *Modern Education*, chapter VII.

GÉZA RÓHEIM

Myth and Folk Tale

A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION of myth and folk tale must start out with a definition and the difficulty that arises here is that the theory should not be implicit in the definition. Therefore the safe way would be to differentiate what is generally known as a myth from what is generally known as a folk tale.

In a myth the actors are mostly divine and sometimes human. In a folk tale the *dramatis personae* are mostly human and especially the hero is human frequently with supernatural beings as his opponents. In a myth we have definite locality; in a folk tale the actors are nameless, the scene is just anywhere. A myth is part of a creed; it is believed by the narrator. The folk tale is purely fiction, and not intended to be anything else. According to a method of interpretation which is now (luckily) extinct, a myth always deals with natural phenomena, while according to another view which had advocates among the anthropologists of the previous generation and also has many influential representatives today, a myth is always connected with a ritual. In these views we have the elements of a theory and they go beyond what we should call a definition. Wundt and von der Leyen thought that the myth and the "Marchen" which

are so similar to each other in certain ways and yet so different must have had one common origin, a type of narrative from which both have developed in the course of evolution (Mythen-marchen).

I have collected myths and folk tales in many areas and if I just make a hasty mental survey of my own collections I find that in some areas a clear line of distinction runs between the two while in others matters seem to be more confused. Now considering the magnitude of the task and the avowedly preliminary nature of this effort I will make matters easy for myself and consider the situation only in central Australia. Here we have a very clear distinction between a folk tale and a mythological narrative so that at least our starting point seems secure.

Before I went out to the field very little was known about folk tales in central Australia. The narratives recorded by Spencer and Gillen and Strehlow were pure myths and more than that they were *esoteric myths*, that is they were known only to the initiated. I wondered whether women and children had no narratives of their own; it did not seem probable to me that this type of sublimation should be absent. I never found it by looking for it; I found it by pure chance. One of the old women who used to come and tell me her dreams launched out into a long narrative that did not sound like a dream at all. "Did you really dream this?" I asked her. No, this is not something she dreamed last night, it is an old *altjira* (dream). Then I found out that the Aranda word *Altjira* meant both dream and folk tale. In the western (Luritja) dialects the situation is the same, *tukurpa* means myth and folk tale.

Once I knew what to ask for, there was no difficulty in collecting more than a hundred folk tales from this area. The interesting thing in these folk tales is that they are of a type that is utterly unknown from any other primitive area. Primitive folk tales, including other narratives of this type from Australia, are more varied than my collection. Many of them are on the lines familiar to students of folklore from Dänhardt's *Naturmärchen*. They are explanatory narratives which end up with some peculiarity of an animal species or some phenomenon in nature. Therefore they are hardly "Märchen" at all in our sense of the word, because the ending indicates a certain claim to be believed, attempt at connecting the fable with reality.

My collection is quite different. They are variations of one constant theme; the struggle of human beings against the demons. The hero of a story is always an indatoa (L. kuninjatu) which translated literally means a good-looking man. The heroine is a tneera (L. aneera), i. e. a beauty. In a sense it does not really mean beautiful, it is just normal healthy, not monstrous. On the other hand, however, sometimes it is stressed that the indatoa is really a beautiful man, big and strong, with fair skin and fair hair and he is a skilled hunter. His wife the tneera is fair and beautiful like her husband. Some of the full-blooded natives actually have fair hair (Aranda ilpirtja or aralkara, Alice Springs).

As antagonists we have the nanananas, and bankalangas. They are hairy giants with big penises and testicles with some of the characteristics of the "stupid devils" of European folklore. The females of the species have big breasts and genitals, sometimes they are superhuman in size. Besides these two opposing groups there is a third actor on the scene, the malpakara, who seems to be halfway between the hero and the villain of the melodrama. The malpakara is always a young man with an unbridled craving for intercourse. This is about the only thing he can do, but the folk tales give hyperbolic description of his sexual prowess. He will go on having intercourse for several days and nights or he will push a woman along with his penis inserted into her vagina. Moreover the malpakara is always represented as thin, ugly and a very poor hunter. After his initiation he becomes a real human being, a kuninjatu.

The kulaia (L. muruntu), a fabulous serpent—who rises out of the water holes right up to the sky in a whirlwind and swallows people, may be on either side; he may appear in the role of a demon or of a normal human being who has been transformed into a serpent by evil magic.

But the most outstanding feature of all these narratives is cannibalism. The war between human beings and ogres is being waged with equal ruthlessness on both sides but whereas the ogres always eat the indatoas, human beings never retaliate in kind. Neither do they bury the body of the ogre or put it up on a kind of scaffold which would be the two ways these tribes have of disposing of their dead. The ogre is always burnt at the end and the human beings

are always victorious. Besides cannibalism the other outstanding feature of these narratives is the happy end.

The story starts with a sentence like this:

"An indatoa lived with a tneera," or "an old man lived with his grandson," and ends with the formula "then they came to a big camp and lived there forever." It is quite striking that while most primitive folk tales have no such beginning and end formulas, the beginning and the end of an Australian folk tale finds its closest parallels in Europe—"Once upon a time," and "They lived happily ever afterwards." The other striking analogy with European Märchen is the transformation motive in its particular setting. Just as in the European folk tale the animal metamorphosis of the hero is frequently the result of a curse of an injured person; there the serpent form is due to the evil magic of a man whose wife the other man has captured.

When taken in conjunction with another feature of these folk tales, their peculiar and sometimes even weird archaism and savagery, one is certainly tempted to believe that here "our plummets have touched bottom" and that we have here actually a type of narrative which is the forerunner of folk tales. In order to show what I mean by the weird character of these narratives I had better give one or two examples.

"Two bankalangas came on from the west. One came on the top of the hill, the other on the plain. The one of the plain saw a kuninjatu with his wife eating a kangaroo. He threw a stone as a sign to the other bankalanga and then he came down from the hill. The two bankalangas sneaked up and one of them speared the kuninjatu right through the ribs. The woman ran away. The second bankalanga threw a stick at her neck and killed her. Then he ran up to her and tried to put his fingers into her vagina to pull the young ones out as if she were a kangaroo. First they ate the kangaroo, then the man, and then the woman. They kept repeating this. They opened the vulva wide to pull the young ones out, putting their arm in. Finally one of the women managed to get away and went to a big camp whence she brought many kuninjatus. The bankalangas put charcoal on ¹ and they came up. The kuninjatus encircled them, then they all got up and speared them. They burnt all the bodies

and went back to a big camp where they *kutunyinanyi*" (stayed always).

In another case we find the same "savagery" in the sexual sphere. "Two thin malpakara boys came from the west. They found that a wild dog had killed a kangaroo and they picked the half rotten corpse up and ate it. Then they find a fresh kangaroo killed by a wild dog and eat that. They miss every kangaroo they try to spear and the next time all they can get is a kangaroo skin left by the dog which they cooked and ate. One of them had an erection, the penis was like an arm and moved up and down. They keep commenting on the size of each other's penis. One of them puts his penis into the other one's anus and that is how they walk along. Finally they came to a camp where a kuninjatu lived with his wife. The man exchanged meat with them and they were friends. But when the man left his wife behind to get seeds the two malpakara caught her *mbanja fashion*.² She resisted in a crouched position. They had intercourse with her, ejaculating on every part of her body including the anus excepting only the vagina. One of them stands on guard to kill the returning husband. But both miss him and he kills them. Then the woman whose whole body was dripping with semen got up, wiped herself with grass and they burnt the bodies and *kutu nyinanyi*." (Abbreviated version.)

Our Central Australians are "savage" enough from a European point of view but the folk tales are far more so. There is less native culture in them, some institutions like the marriage classes are completely absent, others like totemism barely mentioned. And there is more "savagery," more sadism, more unbridled lust and aggression. Perhaps they actually reflect a phase of culture that is more primitive than that of the Central Australians as we find them today. Some of the customs described by D. Bates certainly give me the impression of a society far more savage than any I have known among the Aranda or Yumu or Pitjantara.³ I have heard nothing like her account of the Koogurda who hunted and ate kangaroo and emu and human flesh on much the same level, or the Kaalurwonga who pursued fat men, women and girls and ate them. Or the account of Dowie who was given four baby sisters to eat and was rubbed over with their fat to make him grow big and strong. He hated his

mother Bildana and his other mothers and his sisters and his brothers. He would have eaten them all but they were older than he was, and so they could not be given to him to eat. At the blood drinking he drank greedily and swallowed the big pieces of raw liver at initiation. He brought home many human bodies for he would stalk human game in murderer's slippers and he loved the flesh of man, woman and child. More than this even; he killed and ate his own four wives.

Dowie is certainly behaving like the bankalangas and nanananas of our folk tales and one possible explanation of these narratives would therefore be *historical*. They represent the past of native civilization, social and cultural conditions that antedate those we find at the present time. Then we should also have to assume that they are accounts of warfare between two tribes, one of them cannibalistic (the bankalangas) and the other not cannibalistic. Since Central Australian tribes are actually in the habit of confusing their concepts of a demon with those of the neighboring tribe, since there is in their minds not much difference between the *leltja* (avenger, human being), the *ltana* (ghost), and the *erintja* (demon), such a theory would seem quite plausible. Yet, while admitting that some of the features of the folk tale in Central Australia might well be accounted for on these lines, there are some obvious difficulties. Why is the folk tale called a dream? Why does it usually end with marriage? What is the role of the *malpakara*, who becomes a normal person after initiation? What is the explanation of the demons' huge genital organs? If the narrative is historical we should expect names and localities, especially the latter since we see that locality is such an important factor in their myths.

I think we can account for these aspects of the story from a different angle. The prevailing form of cannibalism in Central, South and Western Australia is "baby-eating." The *Pitjantara* eat every second child. The infant is knocked on the head by the father and then eaten by the mother and the siblings who are supposed to acquire double strength by this proceeding. With the *Pindupi*, *Yumu*, and *Ngali* the proceeding is more irregular; they seem to eat the babies whenever they are hungry and especially when the mother gets a strong craving to do so. They even go to the length

of pulling the fetus out of the womb and eating it—which is exactly the practice ascribed to the demons in the story.

The cannibal demons represent the cannibal parents. The Australian child has to face a peculiar difficulty in his attitude toward his parents, that is, in growing up. He has really loving parents who grant him nearly everything. His mother and the other mothers of the tribe never refuse their nipple, both parents are always ready to play with him and they rarely restrict even his aggression against their own person. Yet these same parents have eaten his siblings and therefore might have eaten him also. Now compare the motives of some of my folk tales to this situation.

1. A manatatai (another name for the cannibal demon) steals a boy and takes him to his camp to be eaten.

2. The father follows on the track and attacks the giants with his magic stick.

3. The giants kill each other. Father and son go home.

The paternal imago has undergone a fission. The kind loving father of everyday life is the one who protects and rescues his son while the cannibal father appears in the guise of the cannibal giant. The giants fighting against each other represents this ambivalence of the father imago. The next story shows this process of fission quite clearly.

1. A boy lives with his grandfather who is half a demon.

2. The grandfather has a mate in a cave who is a real demon.

3. The old man and the boy hunt wallabies; the old man is always trying to entice the boy into the cave.

4. He lights a fire at the entrance of the cave and kills both old men. The boy goes to another camp.

A favorite trick of the demons in these stories again reminds us of European folklore. In European "Marchen" we find the episode in the following form. The hero meets an old witch whose jaws reach to the sky and who is otherwise as hideous as she can be. He says, "Good morning, grandmother," and the witch says, "It's lucky you called me grandmother, otherwise I would have killed you." In my Australian collection the male or female demon always poses as some relation of the unsuspecting human being in order to eat him afterwards.

A bankalanga lived with his wife and with them lived a human (kunjatu) child whom they had stolen. They had a big hut with a partition in it. The bankalanga slept on the partition and his wife and the child slept on the ground. The child thought he was alone in the hut with his mother because he never saw the bankalanga. She sent him out for rats and when he brought them in she passed them to her husband who was hidden behind the partition. One day the child said, "It is raining into the hut." But it was not rain; it was the bankalanga's urine. The old woman said, "Make a big fire and dry yourself." He did this but next day he could still smell the wet sand. "This is not water, it is urine," he says. He called the old woman to go hunting but he stayed at home and hid. Then he saw the male bankalanga coming out of the hut and going back again. He set fire to the hut and burnt it with the bankalanga in it and he went to the real people. When the old woman returned she found the husband dead and followed the boy's footsteps, weeping. The real people killed her too and burnt her with her husband. The boy was initiated and lived there always.

The child transforms the "bad parents" into demons; he is not their child at all, they have stolen him from his real parents. In the beginning there is no such thing as a father, the world for the infant consists in himself and his mother. But father and mother are doing something mysterious in the hut and finally the father's presence becomes obvious and emotionally significant through his sexual activity (primal scene). The father's urine stands for his semen and we know that enuresis or in general urinating is an infantile form of rivalry with the father's sexual activity.

Fire and water, as in this narrative, are exactly the most widespread symbols for urine; and if the bankalanga is regularly burnt, in the end this might well mean that the father conflict is here fought out on the urethral level. The end of the story is that the boy gets initiated or marries and lives happily ever afterwards. It is a young child's dream about growing up.

In European folk lore, narratives about the trolls and ogres are fairly similar to these Australian folk tales about bankalanga and nananana. In the Norse story "The Blue Belt" a lad and his mother come to the house of the troll. She pretends to be afraid of the troll

and is reluctant to enter the house but he goes right in and says to the giant, "Good evening, grandfather." "Well, here I have sat three hundred years and no one has ever called me grandfather before." After supper the giant says, "As for beds, I don't know what's to be done. I have only got one bed and a cradle, but we could get on pretty well if you would sleep in the cradle and then your mother might lie in the bed yonder."

So now the hero is in the cradle. He pretends to be asleep but he is listening to what the troll is talking with his mother—who, although the story in its present form does not say so, are evidently in bed together. "We two might live here so happily together could we only be rid of this son of yours." The rest of the narrative with the "treacherous mother" motive, the castration symbolism, and its ultimate happy end does not concern us.

Here the point is that the troll is obviously the father as a stranger and enemy, that the hero is in the cradle and that he is witnessing the primal scene. In this primal scene situation the mother is betraying the son for the father's sake. Very frequently however we have the opposite formula. The technical term for this role of the mother is "*Hilfsalte*," the helpful old woman. The devil's mother or wife plays this role in the folk tale called "*The Devil's Three Golden Hairs*."

The hero has to get three golden hairs from the devil, the sun, or a dragon. The ogre's wife hides him under the bed; the devil when he comes home wants to eat him. Now comes the scene about the dialogue between the two supernaturals (devil and wife) and the eavesdropping of the child hero. The latter wants not only the three golden hairs, but also the answer to certain questions. These questions are: why can't the princess be delivered of her child? why has the water ceased to flow in the well? why has the tree ceased to bear apples? etc., and the answer is that a toad, or snake, or a corpse is buried there and has to be taken out, then the water will flow again, the tree will bear fruit again, etc.⁴ It is clear that the toad and the other hidden live things symbolize the embryo in the womb and that the scene is a combination of body-destruction phantasies and retaliation (take the child out of the womb and eat it—be eaten

by father) and castration, anxiety (hair torn out, "eaten" as in the case of the wolf-boy).

After overcoming all the anxieties connected with the process of growing up the narrative ends with the hero's marriage. "Jack and his mother became very rich and he married a great princess and they lived happy ever after." "Then the Princess married him and all went wondrously well." A striking confirmation of this theory, that the hero of the folk tale is a young boy, comes from an unexpected angle. Hero and heroine are fair-haired. Now fair hair actually occurs among pure-blooded aborigines, but as Professor Ashley Montagu tells me, only as a juvenile trait which disappears in adult age. From my own memory I can confirm this.

Now something about the myth again from a Central Australian point of view. The mythical heroes have definite names and their wanderings take place in definite localities. Indeed the myth is mainly concerned with explaining these localities, it is definitely trying to link up phantasy and reality. The map is marked by ceremonies and the rites of the present day are merely repetitions of the rites celebrated by the primeval ancestors.

All these rites form a part of the initiation ritual and the ancestors seem to have nothing else to do than to initiate their young men. But the story is not about the young people, not about the initiated but about the initiators. The difference in the final sentence is significant. In the folk tale it is the Central Australian equivalent of "they were married and lived happily ever afterwards." In the myth it is *borkerake tjurungeraka*: he was tired and became transformed into a tjurunga, i.e. he died. Becoming a tjurunga ends the story and the career of the hero, *it is death and apotheosis. A folk tale is a narrative with a happy end, a myth is a tragedy; a god must die before he can be truly divine.*⁵

A detailed analysis of my myth material reveals that certain heroes of the altjiranga mitjina (the eternal ones of the dream) are merely adjectives of the one great hero Malpunga, the phallic originator of the tjurunga cult. Malpunga is often called the great father and he is the leader of a group of young men. The significant thing is however that these mythical personages who are derived from adjectives

originally applied to Malpunga always have names that imply a curse (like "Rough anus," etc.), i.e., that the names represent the aggression of the brothers against the Primal Father. In a version collected by Strehlow subincision is performed on the father by his son out of jealousy. Some of the tribes in western New Guinea have myths of the Australian type in which the wanderings of a totemistic ancestral hero are told, ending with his death and apotheosis. After finishing their life on earth these ancestors become petrified or changed into trees and they are honored as the patron spirits of certain localities and groups. In these narratives the Oedipus and Primal Horde theme is strongly marked. Aramemb adopts Jawi as his son, when Jawi seduces Aramemb's wife he kills him by magic. Then he tries to revive him but he arrives too late and this is how death came into the world. But death is again denied in the apotheosis that follows. From Jawi's grave a coconut palm arises miraculously and Jawi becomes the Dema (spirit or god) of the coconut palm.⁴

The Kiwai myth of Marunogere is very instructive. Marunogere, the great leader, swallows a lump of sago like a cassowary and defecates it back unchanged but the sago is then rapidly transformed into a pig which he names after himself, Marunogere. All the people hunt the pig and his youngest son shoots it, so he dies, but comes to life again for a short time. He opens the vulva of the women and teaches people to have intercourse. Then he dies again and after his death people cut up and preserved his flesh as strong "medicine" and in some places they have preserved small pieces of dried human flesh which is said to be that of Marunogere's body.⁶ So far we see a clear Oedipus and Primal Horde myth. It starts with a phantasy, frequently found in our analysis, and the enhanced magical power of the father who has become a representative of both parents in the anal delivery phantasy. Then we have the attack of the group, the youngest son as murderer of the Primal Father, the death of the latter as origin of death in general. When the father is dead, human beings grow up; they have intercourse. If the youngest son were the hero of the narrative and the story were to end at this point, we should have what I regard as the kernel of all "Marchen" plots. However, the hero in this narrative is the father and the revolt is regarded as a crime and an outrage. The psychological background

of the story is a strong father identification. The sequel of the narrative is that besides Marunogere there was another great man called Gibogu. This chief wanted everybody to take part in the *moguru*. (*The myth is the first moguru and the prototype of all subsequent rites.*) Marunogere wished to keep the ceremony secret and to give prominence to the sexual aspects which were to take place in the dark. On account of the quarrel, Gibogo and his followers left the rest and went up into the sky where they cause the thunder to frighten Marunogere and his people. The second chief, introduced at the end of Marunogere, is the part that opposes sexuality and frightens people from the sky by his thunder. Like so many of his thunder wielding colleagues he represents law and order, the Superego.

If we believe that the nucleus of myth is the death and apotheosis of the Primal Father we support a theory once so very popular among anthropologists according to which the *gods are the dead*. If at the same time we assume as a regular or at least frequent phase of evolution the type of totemistic myth found in Australia and New Guinea, in which mythological ancestors are identified with an animal species or natural phenomena, this would be one of the channels through which a "nature mythology" could develop. Whereas some of these myths may be handed down directly as oral tradition from the Primal Horde period⁷ others may have been created by later generations on the old lines and in these we may find the marks left on myth by history. Others may have stepped into the Primal Father's shoes. But the main thing is that this type of narrative is only conceivable on a superego level, that is it must be based on a strong father identification. This is the "tragic conflict" of the hero rebel. And this difference in ontogenetic stage, the folk tale with its fight against "Superego precursors," "wicked parent" imagos, and the myth with its roots in the fully fledged superego, may account for the different attitude to reality that we find in myth. The fully developed superego represents the real father or at least the real father enters into the picture beside the phantasy image of infancy. Moreover in the overlying, conscious strata, the superego also stands for society. Myths in the "Primal Horde style," that is, myths that represent the brothers revolting against a single father, might very well arise later, not by inherited memory but by the idea of shared

responsibility and identification as defenses against superego anxiety. It is too much to be against the father and against the group at the same time, therefore by introducing the device of representation by the opposite, the father becomes the Lone Hero and the enemy of society. The son becomes part of the group, and by this *fission in the superego*, his anxiety is reduced and revolt becomes imaginable. As this conflict is partly real, as it is a more adult form of the same conflict which we find in "Marchen" on a more infantile level, myth is a phantasy that demands to be believed and is bound up with group activity in the form of ritual.

In the folk tale we relate how we overcame the anxiety connected with the "bad parents" and grew up, in myth we confess that only death can end the tragic ambivalence of human nature. Eros triumphs in the folk tale, Thanatos in the myth.

¹ "Narkapala"; means that he is ready to fight.

² Marriage by rape.

³ The natives described in her account live south and west of those I have known.

⁴ The Toad which is usually the cause of the trouble with the well or tree is here under the Princess' bed and is the cause of her sickness.

⁵ This hypothesis aims at what I have come to regard as the kernel of the folk tale and of the myth; it cannot account for every narrative which, according to our definition, should be called a myth. Gods like Thor and Indra seem to be deified "Marchen" heroes and it is with this type of myth that O. Rank is mainly concerned.

⁶ According to the theory I am advocating in this paper this is a typical myth and not a folk tale [Marchen].

⁷ I again emphasize that I am trying to give an explanation which does not necessitate the assumption of an "inherited unconsciousness."

FRANZ ALEXANDER

*The Psychoanalyst
Looks at Contemporary Art*

PRODUCTS OF ART can be looked upon from two different points of view: the aesthetic and the psychologic. The aesthetician and the art critic try to evaluate their artistic merit. The psychologist is not primarily concerned with what is a good or a bad painting; he considers the works of artists as valuable personal documents which throw light upon the personality of their originator. Like dreams or daydreams, works of literature, painting, and sculpture are products of the creative fantasy which reflect the psychology of the artist. The psychological study of art products may serve not only for the study of the artist as a person, but also for the study of the emotional climate of a historical period. Because the work of an artist is a reflection of his personality as well as a reflection of the spirit of its times, the literature and art of a given period are most important documents for the historian of culture. I am primarily concerned here with the question: in what way does contemporary art express the spirit of our era, as Byzantine art expressed the mentality of the Middle Ages, or impressionism the outlook of the second half of the nineteenth century?

In order to answer this question, one must first of all establish the characteristic features of contemporary painting. As in every past historical period as well as at present, there is a great divergence in subject matter and technique used by the different artists. In spite of these individual differences, there are fundamental similarities. It is not difficult, even for a nonexpert, to recognize Byzantine painting or to distinguish a Renaissance product from a nineteenth-century impressionist picture. Obviously, there are certain common features which are characteristic of a period, although it is not always easy to define them precisely.

Earlier art historians tried to explain these common features primarily from the point of view of the techniques used by the artists. It is only recently that some cultural historians have attempted to understand the prevailing style in art characteristic of a historical period from the cultural climate to which all persons living in a given time and place are equally exposed. Naturally, there are always exceptions—artists who do not represent the current trend. In trying to define the characteristic features of contemporary painting, we shall disregard those works which are not representative of our times. An artist of today may try to paint in the style of Rembrandt or Titian, but such exceptional cases must be explained on a highly individual basis. They may offer most interesting opportunities to study the psychology of such atypical artists, but they are not suitable for reconstructing the prevailing ideological trends and spirit of our times.

What, then, are the most basic common features in contemporary paintings? One basic similarity consists either in the complete absence of real objects or in their radical distortion. In modern painting this trend is referred to as nonobjective art, or abstract art. There may be a lack of any reference to real objects, as for example in some paintings of Mondrian or Klee. In other works the objects are fragmented into their constituent parts and reassembled in different perspective, as in cubist paintings. In these it is sometimes well-nigh impossible to recognize the fragmented object, the product often resembling a piece of a picture puzzle. Again, in other paintings, the object is simply distorted but is still recognizable, or is reduced

to its most elementary, often geometrically simplified, formal and basic color components.

Another feature consists in the distortion of the spatial configuration without fragmentation of the objects—in placing disconnected objects side by side. Another type of distortion consists in emphasizing certain aspects of the object which are commonly considered to be unpleasant. This may result in grotesque, ugly, or fear-inspiring effects, as for example in many of Grosz's drawings. In using such an expression as "ugly," I do not refer to the artistic merits of a painting. To represent ugliness is just as legitimate a function of art as to represent something which may be called pretty. Othello's deed was certainly ugly, yet is the subject of a great piece of literature.

Another frequent feature in both modern and psychotic products is the tendency toward the fantastic, the eerie, the mystical, and toward dreamlike symbolism. Examples are certain paintings of Chagall, Miró, Dali, Tanguy, and many others. Another feature is the tendency to use primitive perspective or to mix different perspectives, presenting an object from all sides at the same time. This is not to be confused with the primitive way in which different perspectives were used by some early Renaissance painters.

All these characteristics, from the point of view of psychology, can be interpreted as the manifestation of a central trend: withdrawal from the world as perceived through the sense organs, and substituting for it a newly created, different kind of world. Of course, almost every artist, unlike a photographer, substitutes for the mere reproduction of the world of senses his own interpretation of his object. The mildest forms of this tendency are simplification, omission, and emphasis, utilized to a greater or lesser degree by artists of all periods. This reinterpretation, however, goes much farther in contemporary painting than in the works of most great masters of the past. The great freedom of reinterpretation of the environment as perceived by our senses is characteristic of the contemporary painter. Everything which appears ephemeral and nonessential is omitted and certain fundamentals are emphasized, as in the post-impressionist paintings of Van Gogh or Cézanne.

The next step in this direction is abstraction, which may go as far as reducing the object to its simplest geometric outlines. Or the ne-

gation of a real world of senses may manifest itself in distortion. This is usually not a simple negation of the world as it is; it often has a hostile component; it expresses an angry denial of the world as it is commonly perceived. For the psychologist this emphasis on the grotesque, or what one ordinarily would call unpleasant, is a clear confession of resentful rejection. Even stronger rejection is expressed in the completely objectless paintings. Only the very basic components of the visual universe are retained—color and line, light and dark. From these basic elements the artist creates a new view of a spatial world which contains no real objects. The cubist revolution contained both trends: the denial of the world as it is along with an even stronger motivational force to rearrange the fragmented parts of objects in a new, seemingly wanton but really highly consistent manner. It is as if the artist would challenge the creator and prove that he too can create a world according to his own system.

As I said before, every artist creates his own world. The question is how much he retains of these actual elements as they are perceived by the senses. Most contemporary artists go much farther than their predecessors, with the exception of the primitives, in utilizing for the reconstruction of the world only the most basic elements, such as lines and colors, and disregarding what might be called the incidental combination of lines, forms, and colors as they appear in the environment.

It is like transposing a melody from one key to another. The great contemporary painters, such as Braque and Picasso, use the same artistic skill with which the old masters represented the real world we live in, to transform this world according to a consistent formula of their own. In the work of one of the forerunners of the era, Modigliani, the recreative urge is the strongest. He is really not so much a revolutionary as a reformer. Modigliani gives expression to his reforming urge in a consistent, longitudinal distortion of proportions and bilateral symmetry. This has sometimes been misinterpreted as a mannerism. In reality it is but inner consistency in distortion. Otherwise Modigliani retains much of the technique of the old masters and even has a flavor of the Renaissance in his work.

Denial and radical re-creation of the world of the senses is one

of the all-pervasive keynotes in contemporary art. The "re-creator" of the world sometimes uses technological motifs, as does, for example, Léger. It appears as if the artist would envy the engineer who has actually succeeded in reshaping the surface of the globe and in superimposing upon the work of nature a new, technologically created, man-made world. Another way of creating a completely new world populated with dreamlike symbols is prevalent in the work of Miró and Tanguy.

We see, then, that the denial of the real world of objects is a well-nigh universal characteristic of contemporary art. It is not merely a reinterpretation of the world—this is universal in every art—but a fundamental transformation combined with an aggressive denial of the objects in the form they are commonly perceived. The ways and means of this re-creation are widely different, according to the inclination and personality of the painter. The emphasis may be more on either denial, rejection and ridicule, or on magic re-creation. In some nonobjective painters, for example, Mondrian, the nihilistic rejection of everything which even reminds one of the real world, is the main issue. Ridicule of any order or reason is outstanding in Dadaism, as if the more unexpected and the more random the juxtaposition of the elements, the better the collage. Since everybody retains in himself a residue of childish revolt against the obligation to be orderly and sensible, this type of repudiation of order and reason has a secret appeal similar to Freud's explanation of the so-called nonsense jokes.

The question arises: is this trend in contemporary art—to reject and to remodel the surrounding world—unique? Some students of aesthetics will have a ready answer! These features are not at all characteristic of contemporary art alone—they are present in every form of art and literature. No *real* artist ever tries to give merely a faithful reproduction of reality. The specific creative act consists precisely in the artist's attempt to re-create in his own manner the surrounding world. This re-creative urge may manifest itself in many different ways and is present even in the realist painter and writer. It has often been emphasized that the great artist reproduces the essence of the subject. A Rembrandt portrait of an old man, while it represents one specific person, at the same time condenses into the

work the universal features of all the old men who ever lived and will live in the future. The presentation of the universal, the timeless, the essential, has long been considered one of the main accomplishments of the artist. The conventional formulation of aesthetics, that the writer and the artist express the universal through the specific, the abstract through the concrete, applies also to impressionist art. The meadow in an impressionist painting is not a meadow in general, but a meadow at 3:30 on an afternoon in June.

Another creative accomplishment of the artist is the condensation into one concrete example of the significant interrelationships among the objects depicted. A street of Paris by Pissarro is more than the representation of one special geographical location in the metropolis; it reflects the spirit of contemporary Paris through the fleeting impression made upon the onlooker. The ensemble, the tree-lined sidewalks, the advertisements, the color and attire of the milling crowd, all together have a common denominator expressing something essentially characteristic of the city. The artist's creation is to condense all this in one composition, not merely photographic, yet a faithful reproduction of one fleeting impression. In a sense it is much more realistic than a photograph because the visual impression is a highly selective act which emphasizes, distorts, and omits various details. The camera can never show how reality actually reflects itself in the onlooker.

When technical terms enter into common usage, they have a tendency to lose their original meaning. After they are in use for a while, the terms begin to live their own lives, gradually developing new connotations and thus becoming a source of confusion. This is precisely what happened to the words "impressionism" and "expressionism." Nothing is further from the truth than "the saying" that the impressionist represents the outer world, the expressionist his inner world. The impressionist expresses something extremely subjective just as does the expressionist painter. Both represent, although in very different ways, the manner in which the world affects them. Both express their relation to the world. Negation of the world is as much an expression of a relation as is acceptance. The real difference between the two schools lies in their acceptance or rejection of the world. The impressionist painters of the nineteenth cen-

ture had a warm attachment to the world. Their pictures express more than acceptance—they express both curiosity and adoration. And this adoring love extends not only to sunshine, but to the rain, the fog, the meadow, the city street, the *boite*, the stage, the delicate ankles of the ballerina, and the robust petty bourgeois in the garden restaurant. What the impressionist represents is not the real world of objects but his warm acceptance of this world to which he trustingly exposes himself and which he takes in faithfully and lovingly. To be sure, the primary interest of the impressionist era is in the man-made world: the street, the park, the sidewalk café, the dance hall, the beach with umbrellas; and not so much the forest, the wild mountain peak, or the stormy sea—not unadulterated nature, which was the preferred topic of the romantics. The confident, urbane Western European looked with love and pride upon his own creation. Paris became a principal theme as the pinnacle of this individualistic, enterprising world—of a world which believed in unlimited progress, in reason and science, and in whose hierarchy of values art, literature, and music, the basic sciences and philosophy, as in Plato's *Republic*, occupied the highest rank. This intellectual élite had its own exclusive society, which it exposed to the masses in the café and the literary cabaret. The public, particularly the well-to-do middle class, participated vicariously in this life, looking through the peepholes of literature, painting, and the stage. Their own preoccupation with industry and commerce, which supplied the material foundation of this progressing world, appeared to them a humdrum existence the main purpose of which, at least in theory, was to make this exalted aesthetic hedonism of the spiritual élite possible. In practice, of course, this existence was mostly meager indeed, but in theory material wealth was there to serve the spiritual progress of knowledge, art, literature, and the art of living; money was not an end in itself.

Then suddenly in the summer of 1914, in a Balkan slum district, the fatal explosion took place and the bubble of this aesthetic culture burst. The European's crude awakening was a sudden and overwhelming one. The real forces of the world—industry, the military machine, and diplomacy—which until now had modestly and tactfully remained in the background and ceded the arena of public life

to art, science, the stage, and literature, took over the scene of history overnight. "Blood and gold" are ruling the world, lamented the poet Andreas Ady, the Hungarian Verlaine, who sipped his absinthe in the sidewalk cafés of Paris and Budapest, and was one of the most sensitive exponents of decadence. With one stroke the painters and poets showed themselves to be nothing but the luxuries of a wealthy, carefree, and peaceful era; the industrial producer, the soldier, and the diplomat regained the leading role from which they were removed for a short and happy period of history. And the exponents of the aesthetic ideology, thus deprived of their *raison d'être*, turned around and revolted against a world which showed up the futility of their esoteric existence. Their answer was at first angry indignation and scorn, and then total rejection of the world which now so convincingly disclosed its sordid realities. "The real world is ugly, not worth-while—why give it the consideration to depict it as it is!" Not the pleasing superstructure but the ugly skeleton became the popular subject. "We, the painters and writers, shall show you how repugnant and ridiculous the world is and we shall rebuild it according to our own magic formula." It was not said in these words, but this is what the Blue Riders in Munich, the futurists in Italy, the Dadaists in Switzerland, the Bohème of the Café du Dôme, professed. The futurist Marinetti, who also invented the symbol of fascism, announced at a demonstration in Paris: "Destroy syntax! Sabotage the adjective!" And in Berlin, at the opening of a fall exhibition of paintings: "Destroy the museums! Burn down the libraries!"¹ Now the aesthetic vibrations of the moment, so removed from the actual brutal facts of life, were no longer a worthy subject of art. Now the desperate efforts of Schnitzler's Anatole to endow his love affairs with suburban ingénues with the esoteric illusions by which this anemic Vienna playboy tried to enrich his bland, uneventful life, suddenly belonged to the era of yesterday, which had lost all its meaning in the dynamic present. To continue to indulge in the sentimental contemplation of the boulevard, extracting from it all shades of subjective variations of mood, was no longer appropriate in a Paris which had just recently been saved by its taxi drivers from military invasion. Impressionism, the hedonistic exploitation of the leisurely moment,

became just as incompatible with the spirit of the day as a jazz band at a funeral. And thus almost overnight, in the second decade of the twentieth century, this loving acceptance of the world changed into its opposite, into an angry rejection.

All this, of course, did not come so suddenly as it would appear at first sight. About the turn of the century the suspicion of having been double-crossed began to grow in the European mind. At first only the artists and writers, the forerunners of their time, gave expression to a change of attitude. What the artist anticipated by presentiment, the rest of us realized a few years later. For us it was in August of 1914 that this period of Western history came to an end. For the insensitive it appeared as a sudden collapse; in reality, it was a gradual disintegration. Indeed, the collapse of nineteenth-century ideology, its confidence in steady progress, its aesthetic, hedonistic value system in which the arts, music, literature, and pure science occupied a supreme position, and above all, the unquestioned loving acceptance of the world as man made it, was not as sudden as it appeared to the average man. The signs of decline, presaging the apocalypse, were numerous and steadily growing. The truth that every development contains the germs of its own destruction, and that these latent destructive forces increase as the trend approaches its pinnacle can be demonstrated in the literature and arts at the close of the century. In literature it appeared as the decadent movement. In the poetry of Verlaine, Hofmannsthal, and Rilke, the enjoyment of the moment was mixed with a bittersweet melancholy, a wistful preoccupation with yesterday, an undertone of futility. Hauser characterizes this decadent component in impressionistic literature which was prominent in Vienna:

The Viennese represent the purest form of the impressionism which forgoes all resistance to the stream of experience. Perhaps it is the ancient and tired culture of this city, the lack of all active national politics, and the great part played in literary life by foreigners, especially Jews, which gives Viennese impressionism its peculiarly subtle and passive character. This is the art of the sons of rich bourgeois, the expression of the joyless hedonism of that "second generation" which lives on the fruits of its fathers' work. They are nervous and melancholy, tired and aimless, skept-

tical and ironical about themselves, these poets of exquisite moods which evaporate in a trice and leave nothing behind but the feeling of evanescence, of having missed one's opportunities, and the consciousness of being unfit for life.²

In England the literary witticism, the provocative aphorism which challenged both reason and Victorian complacency, are more virile portents of the same ideological revolt. In Sweden Strindberg, and in Germany Wedekind, were exposing the less savory features of man.

The detachment from the world of reality and the turning toward the mystical symbolism of the unconscious is seen also in the symbolic poetry of Mallarmé and the symbolic paintings of Redon. The first signs of the urge to replace the world with another more consistent than the old, but still retaining the semblance of reality, appear in the postimpressionistic paintings of Van Gogh and Cézanne. The new Rousseauism of Gauguin, his return to primitive culture and unimproved nature, is another form of repudiation of the Western world. The most evolutionary event in these ideological developments, however, came just about the turn of the century, when Freud proposed his theory of the unconscious mind.

In both art and literature, the estrangement from the world as it appears was progressing relentlessly. With his emphasis on essentials, the skeletal structure of the body which is the same in everyone, the contemporary painter tacitly expresses his scorn for the credulity of the impressionist, who was so easily taken in by the pleasing surface, by clothing, by facial expression, by the skin and the muscles. These only hide the basic realities of the body, the viscera and the bony structure which can best be reproduced by simple geometric configurations. All the surface manifestations of the world, all the aesthetic bric-a-brac by which the ferocious animal, man, tries to hide his real nature were to be disregarded. Blood and gold, and we may add, the blast furnace, are ruling the world. The hypocritical and anemic aestheticism of the last century was a self-deception in which the decadent bourgeois could for a little while indulge himself, so long as he was not challenged by the underground forces of society. As soon as the great masses of humanity became mobilized and clamored for a place in the sun,

this decadent aesthetic bubble disappeared like the foam on a wave in a stormy ocean. Writes Ortega y Gasset, the visionary Spanish philosopher:

The mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified, and select. Anybody who is not like everybody, who does not think like everybody, runs the risk of being eliminated.³

In the dynamic world of Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, and in the era of industrial mass production, the impressionistic and individualistic cultivation of the moment has no place. This is a century of action and not of idle contemplation. From illusions, from the ever-changing, evanescent impressions of the moment, we must return to the basic essentials, not only in social life but also in art and literature, no matter whether they are pleasing or not.

This is what the artists and writers of the early twentieth century express not in so many words, not in theory, but in their own medium of communication. And yet it was difficult, if not impossible, for the artists and writers to change their outlook at a moment's notice. They came into conflict with themselves, having to repudiate everything they professed yesterday and to reject a world in which they grew up. This was, after all, the only world they knew, the world in which they themselves were rooted. The most significant features of contemporary art and literature can be understood only when one realizes that the proponents of expressionism, abstractionism, and surrealism belong to this generation of transition. Their deep-seated conflict, their division of soul, accounts for those features with which the psychiatrist is so well acquainted, and which are reminiscent of psychopathology. They could not merely reject the external world because this world had already made a deep imprint upon their own personality; they had to repudiate a part of the self, that part which psychoanalysis calls the rational conscious ego, which is nothing but the imprint of the external world upon the original unorganized mass of impulses and desires which Freud called the id. The conscious ego is the internal representative of the world of reality as against the original basic instinctual forces. It is the ego which demands the adjustment of the

subjective impulses to the world. Since the rational ego of this generation was the heritage of the nineteenth century, their rebellion forced them to disavow this part of their own self. "The ego must be extirpated from literature," demanded Marinetti in Milan.⁴ The result was an elemental break-through, from the unconscious, of the primitive disorganized impulses of the id. And this is why the unconscious mind as it manifests itself in dreams, in psychopathological symptoms, and in the uncontrolled train of thoughts during free association, became the dominant note of contemporary art and literature. The unconscious broke through most clearly in the symbolism and dreamlike products of surrealist paintings. The unconscious reveals itself directly in dreams, and dreams are primarily products of visual fantasy. Therefore surrealist painting is a most appropriate representation of unconscious mental activity.

Rejection of reality and rebellion against it, however, do not constitute a static mental condition; they represent no final solution. Not even a psychotic can remain in a state of unrelieved revolt. He rejects the world but he must rebuild it according to his own imagery in the form of illusions and hallucinations. Every person does the same in his dreams and daydreams. In fantasy we can correct those aspects of the world which we are not ready to accept and which interfere with our subjective desires that are not adapted to reality. The similarity between the mental processes of the psychotics and the dreams of normal persons has long been recognized. Psychotics in a sense live continuously in a dream world; a healthy person indulges in such wishful distortions of reality only for a brief moment when the organism withdraws from the environment and is relieved from the strenuous task of conforming to the unalterable and sometimes very disturbing facts of reality. Every dream is a rejection of the undesirable aspects of the world, but it is also an attempt to make the world more acceptable. In order to accomplish this, the dreamer regresses to more primitive forms of mental activity. Rational thinking is expressed in words and is a highly advanced form of mental activity which is adjusted to reality. Everyone has to acquire the ability to think rationally during the process of intellectual maturation. In order to return to wishful thinking, the shackles of conscious verbal thinking

must be discarded. In the dream one resumes the more infantile forms of mental activity which are characterized by magic and wish fulfillment. In dreams the ordinary rules of logic are abandoned, the unconscious does not know the limitations of time and space. The unorthodoxy of space relations in contemporary drawings and paintings most appropriately expresses not the empirical space which is conveyed to us by our senses, but the type of space which appears in our dreams. The role of symbols is similar. Pictorial symbols are often based on vague similarities and are therefore in sharp contrast with the precise distinction of meaning conveyed by words.

This affinity of contemporary art to the unconscious mind, particularly dream life, explains certain similarities between paintings of schizophrenics and those of contemporary artists. This similarity has been noted by various psychiatrists and also by artists. Some of them, like Dubuffet, derived great stimulation from studying the drawings of schizophrenic patients. The schizophrenic also withdraws his interest from a world which has become unpalatable and replaces his realistic perceptions with the wishful creation of his own fantasy, his delusions, illusions, and hallucinations. In dreams, as in the fantasy products of schizophrenics, the unconscious mind reveals itself in its full nakedness.

This comparison of contemporary paintings with the products of schizophrenics should not be interpreted as an evaluation of their artistic merits. There are gifted psychotics just as there are gifted neurotics. If Lombroso was right in maintaining that between genius and insanity there is only a narrow dividing line, insanity certainly does not exclude artistic talent. There are several examples of great artists suffering from major psychiatric conditions. Neither does this comparison mean that modern artists are mentally disturbed. To my knowledge, the mental health of modern painters is no different from that of older masters. We find among them mentally healthy persons and neurotics as well as borderline psychotics. Their mental health or illness certainly cannot account for those features in their work which I am considering here. The similarity is based on the close affinity of contemporary art to the deep unconscious layers of the personality which both contemporary

artists and schizophrenics reveal directly. In addition to these similarities there are also great and significant differences. The good contemporary artists attempt to communicate their unconscious processes in an organized fashion. The psychotic's paintings, on the other hand, show disorganization, mostly a flight from the world, with much less constructive effort to recapture the lost contact with the world. The attempt to negotiate a new kind of relation to the world is the main striving of the modern artist.

The withdrawal from the realistic world of objects and the return to the nonrational magic world of symbols and wishful distortions is unavoidably accompanied by confusion and anxiety. Disturbed by confusion and anxiety, the individual tries to recapture the world by reshaping it in fantasy. As we have seen, contemporary art attempts this in a radical way by magic and symbolism and by return to the basic elements of line and color. Some of these paintings express little more than utter confusion, but mostly there is an attempt to bring order into chaos. In cubistic paintings both trends are there: the first impression is that of complete disorder but, on further contemplation, gradually a fascinating and novel principle of organization can be discovered. In other contemporary paintings, as in Mondrian's work, the confusion is completely avoided by offering a simple geometric configuration and the harmony of pure colors and lines. But the artist can achieve this perfect order and harmony only by ignoring the rich variety of the world that surrounds him. This is an orderly but badly impoverished world. The artist tries to recapture mastery over the very little which remains after he repudiates reality. A white square on a black background exhibited by Malevitch in 1913 was the ultimate logical consequence of this defeatist trend to ignore the surrounding universe, which had become so unpalatable. What a contrast between this geometric art, essentially a defeatist attempt to master the nothing, and the magnificent attempts of a Cézanne or a Van Gogh to introduce into the real world new principles of visual organization!

As mentioned before, in every art the world is re-created to some degree, but the artist mostly attempts a more or less realistic re-creation. In contemporary art the re-creation is more radical than

in any previous cultural era. It is the diametric opposite of impressionism, the last and most advanced phase of a cultural development which started with the Renaissance, when European man became liberated from the medieval restrictions upon free inquiry and began to discover the world around him. The uniformity and rigidity of Byzantine paintings gradually gave place to a hitherto unknown freedom to see the world as it is. The background became more and more realistic as well as the facial expression and the body. In all fields of mental activity the trend was the same. Man began to explore the earth, then the celestial bodies, the animal and human organism, and finally the self and the society in which he lives. In art this same trend toward exploration and mastery of the world remained consistent until the end of the nineteenth century. The realistic representation of distinct objects was followed by the impressionist discovery of how to reproduce the medium between the objects. Light and air and the representation of the world in its totality, in the interaction of all its constituent parts, became the aim of painting.

Hauser, in his *Social History of Art*, maintains that the first real ideological revolution since the Renaissance occurred in the twentieth century. The consistent trend toward the exploration and acceptance of the world was not interrupted until our present era, in spite of the fact that many of the innovations in science, art, and literature were accepted only after a period of repudiation. Yet Kepler's astronomical theory was only a step further in the direction initially taken by Galileo and Copernicus, and Einstein's physics was a step beyond Newton. In art, impressionism was at first violently rejected, and yet it was but the last step in the same consistent trend toward the pictorial discovery of the world which started with Giotto.

The first actual reversal of trend against this steadily progressing realism and rationalism is what we are witnessing today. It appeared in literature as a revolt against reason in the use of words according to their acoustic qualities instead of their meaning, in irrational and symbolic stage productions, and finally in the direct representation of the unconscious in free association. In painting it appeared as the withdrawal from representing the world of reality,

in the distortion of spatial relations and the objects themselves. The real revolution consists, however, in the repudiation of the loving acceptance of the world of reality and in the revolt against reason. In politics the same trend manifests itself in the totalitarian emphasis on irrational motivations, on violence, vengeance, and greed, on the praise of a dangerous life. It appears in the form of political adventure and the abolition of freedom of thought and inquiry.

Indeed, looking upon current ideological trends from this perspective offers a gloomy picture. Is this, however, a precise interpretation of the prevailing cultural trend? It is unquestionably true that this century began with a revolt against the nineteenth-century value system, which had remained essentially the same since the Renaissance. That this revolt in literature and art manifested itself in a repudiation of the world of the senses and of reason—which is man's weapon to master the world—is also true. That this revolt was followed in art by an attempt to re-create the external reality by archaic unrealistic and magic mental activities is equally valid. And there can be little doubt that the concurrent fascist and communist developments in Eastern and Central Europe are the manifestations of unbridled instincts in politics. They also have a regressive character and are basically irrational and reactionary movements. The question is how to evaluate all these disturbing facts from the larger perspective of history. Are we at the beginning of a new period of medieval obscurantism in which the individual will lose all his spiritual and political freedom and, in order to save himself as an individual, will have to be content with withdrawal into the archaic wishful imagery of his unconscious mind? In his fear and confusion will he yield to some kind of tyranny and give up all further attempts to master realistically his environment and his fate by increasing his own knowledge, understanding, and reason? Will he be satisfied with powerless protest, flaunting his contempt of reason, ridiculing the world, and retreating into a dream world of surrealistic magic?

One can also look upon these cultural developments in a different manner. The present trend in art and literature may reflect a new step in the exploration of the world: the exploration of the

unconscious. For almost four centuries man turned his interest outward, learning more about the nature of the universe than in any other period of history; he gradually translated his theoretical knowledge into a technological mastery over the forces of nature. During all these impressive accomplishments of extroverted activities, he completely forgot the exploration of his own self. He knew of himself only as much as he wanted to. He built up the illusion of himself as a progressive, rational, basically benign, and socially minded personality, striving for truth, for the cultivation of beauty, and for the realization of social justice. This was taught in the humanistic gymnasiums of the European continent and in the public schools of England. Those writers, artists, and philosophers who challenged this rosy picture of man's personality were disregarded or ridiculed by the official academies of culture. And the parents and teachers, the intellectual leaders, were alerted and on guard against the repeated onslaughts against their own repressions.

Their chief enemy was the Viennese neurologist, Freud, ostracized by the medical society because of his revolutionary teachings concerning the role of sex and the unconscious mind in the causation of neurosis. With the outbreak of the First World War the self-deceptive, complacent ideology began to crumble. And after the war, with the collapse of the political and economic structure of Europe, everything which hitherto was considered safe and stable was swept away. The controlling forces of the personality, in order to keep in check the asocial and irrational forces of the unconscious, need reinforcement from the outside in the form of parental example, law and police, the authority of the state, the teachings of the church and the school. But the disintegrating political and economic structure of Europe could no longer supply these external reinforcements. The older generation had failed in the eyes of the young. They were held responsible for the fiasco of the old system, whether it was the constitutional monarchy, the four-per-cent rate of interest, the gold standard, which appeared to be assured forever, or the conventional standards of the professors, upheld by the academies of the sciences and arts. The external authorities, the living representatives of our internal standards,

became discredited, and the unconscious forces swept through the barriers of the conventional code. The unconscious—with all its elemental forces, mysticism, and irrationality—arose to the surface. It became the principal object of psychology and the social sciences, of art and literature, and it dominated the internal political life of nations as well as world politics. Are we witnessing at this very moment a brief lull before the storm? Will man be able to bring these unleashed, destructive forces under his control again?

The same question on a smaller scale confronts the psychoanalyst every day in his practice. With his therapeutic technique, he tries to bring the unconscious impulses of the patient to the surface. The traditional apprehension with which psychoanalysis was received, the fear that this procedure might unleash all the asocial propensities of the patient, and turn a hitherto harmless neurotic into a selfish, ruthless person, has proven unfounded. We have learned just the opposite. Repression, denial, hypocritical self-deception, have been inadequate defenses against the instinctive forces of man. The only remedy is to make the patient conscious of his deeper impulses. At first the barriers of repression must be overcome before a new and more extended control over the self can be obtained. Not even in a well-conducted treatment does this process of self-revelation always take place without occasional dramatic episodes. When this happens we say that the patient is "acting out." From the point of view of history, the last forty years of Western civilization may be considered as a brief episode of acting out. Who can tell, however, whether or not we are at the end of this dynamic but chaotic phase of cultural and political history? One thing is certain, that if and when we have been able to develop new internal standards and a new relation to a world which has changed faster than our adaptive capacity, a wiser and more conscious humanity will arise. The chaotic eruption of the unconscious has already contributed new dynamic forces which gradually can be brought under the control of reason and utilized constructively. It has already opened up new avenues of artistic expression. From his acquaintance with the unconscious archaic layers of the mind, the artist, in the same way as the scientist, has

gained new materials and techniques for expressing a new relationship to the world.

Freud was not only the discoverer of the unconscious but also the inventor of a technique by which the unconscious forces, after being mobilized, can be brought under the control of the rational mind. After the scientific mastery of the unconscious, its artistic mastery will follow.

In American contemporary art the trend toward reconstruction is more pronounced than the rebellious denial of the world which was so characteristic in the early European developments. In Europe the movement started as an open rebellion against the orderly and optimistic approach of the nineteenth century. Soon after the movement reached the shores of the United States ⁵ it lost much of its bitter and revolutionary connotation and became influenced by the mechanical and reconstructive spirit of an advanced industrial civilization. The effort to bring the unconscious under rational control is conspicuous in the works of many American painters.

There is no room at this time, however, for complacency. We have arrived at a crossroads of cultural development. The complete collapse of Western civilization or a new positive acceptance of the world and the rule of reason are the alternatives. Should the outcome be favorable, we shall have to come to terms with the world around us. Revolt and rejection of reality are destructive reactions and cannot represent a permanent solution. There is no choice—the road must eventually lead back to reality and reason. Life is dependent upon the environment. It is two-way traffic: we express ourselves but we also receive from the environment. Art expresses the relationship of the self to the surrounding world. Negation and re-creation of the world with the help of magic must eventually yield to a more realistic solution. This of necessity will modify artistic style and expression. The naked unconscious, as it often appears in contemporary art, is not a suitable way of communication. It must go through the prism of the organizing portion of the personality, the conscious ego, in order to become meaningful. The artist eventually will emerge from the surrealist detour through the depths of the unconscious mind with a fresh point

of view, richer, and with a new constructive message which he cannot express in this era of negation and confusion.

¹ Walter Mehring, *The Lost Library*, pp. 129-130.

² *The Social History of Art*, Vol. II, p. 908.

³ *The Revolt of the Masses*.

⁴ Mehring, *op. cit.*

⁵ The Armory Show in New York in 1913.

Part Four

THOMAS MANN

Freud and the Future

WE ARE GATHERED here to do honor to a great scientist. And the question may very properly be raised: what justifies a man of letters in assuming the role of spokesman on such an occasion? Or, passing on the responsibility to the members of the learned society which chose him, why should they not have selected one of their own kind, a man of science, rather than an author, to celebrate in words the birthday of their master? For an author, my friends, is a man essentially not bent upon science, upon knowing, distinguishing, and analyzing; he stands for simple creation, for doing and making, and thus may be the object of useful cognition, without, by his very nature, having any competence in it as subject. But is it, perhaps, that the author in his character as artist, and artist in the field of the intellect, is especially called to the celebration of feasts of the mind; that he is by nature more a man of feast days than the scientist and man of knowledge? It is not for me to dispute such a view. It is true, the poet has understanding of the feasts of life, understanding even of life as a feast—and here I am just touching, very lightly for the moment, upon a theme which may become a main motif in the chorus of

homage which we are to perform this evening. But it is more likely that the sponsors of this evening had something else in mind in their choice: that is to say, the solemn and novel confrontation of object and subject, the object of knowledge with the knower—a saturnalia, as it were, in which the knower and seer of dreams himself becomes, by our act of homage, the object of dreamlike penetration. And to such a position I could not object, either; particularly because it strikes a chord capable in the future of great symphonic development. It will recur, more clearly accented and fully instrumented. For, unless I am greatly mistaken, it is just this confrontation of object and subject, their mingling and identification, the resultant insight into the mysterious unity of Ego and actuality, destiny and character, doing and happening, and thus into the mystery of reality as an operation of the psyche—it is just this confrontation that is the alpha and omega of all psychoanalytical knowledge.

Be that as it may, the choice of an artist as the encomiast of a great scientist is a comment upon both. In the first place, one deduces from it a connection between the man of genius we now honor and the world of creative literature; in the second place, it displays the peculiar relations between the writer and the field of science whose declared and acknowledged master and creator the other is. Now, the unique and remarkable thing about this mutual close relation is that it remained for so long unconscious—that is, in that region of the soul which we have learned to call the unconscious, a realm whose discovery and investigation, whose conquest for humanity, are precisely the task and mission of the wise genius whose fame we celebrate. The close relation between literature and psychoanalysis has been known for a long time to both sides. But the solemn significance of this hour lies, at least in my eyes and as a matter of personal feeling, in that on this evening there is taking place the first official meeting between the two spheres, in the acknowledgment and demonstration of their relationship.

I repeat that the profound sympathy between the two spheres had existed for a long time unperceived. Actually we know that Sigmund Freud, that mighty spirit in whose honor we are gathered together, founder of psychoanalysis as a general method of re-

search and as a therapeutic technique, trod the steep path alone and independently, as physician and natural scientist, without knowing that reinforcement and encouragement lay to his hand in literature. He did not know Nietzsche, scattered throughout whose pages one finds premonitory flashes of truly Freudian insight; he did not know Novalis, whose romantic-biologic fantasies so often approach astonishingly close to analytic conceptions; he did not know Kierkegaard, whom he must have found profoundly sympathetic and encouraging for the Christian zeal which urged him on to psychological extremes; and, finally, he did not know Schopenhauer, the melancholy symphonist of a philosophy of the instinct, groping for change and redemption. Probably it must be so. By his unaided effort, without knowledge of any previous intuitive achievement, he had methodically to follow out the line of his own researches; the driving force of his activity was probably increased by this very freedom from special advantage. And we think of him as solitary—the attitude is inseparable from our earliest picture of the man. Solitary in the sense of the word use by Nietzsche in that ravishing essay “What Is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?” when he characterizes Schopenhauer as “a genuine philosopher, a self-poised mind, a man and gallant knight, stern-eyed, with the courage of his own strength, who knows how to stand alone and not wait on the beck and nod of superior officers.” In this guise of man and gallant knight, a knight between Death and the Devil, I have been used to picture to myself our psychologist of the unconscious, ever since his figure first swam into my mental ken.

That happened late—much later than one might have expected, considering the connection between this science and the poetic and creative impulse in general and mine in particular. The connection, the bond between them, is twofold: it consists first in a love of truth, in a sense of truth, a sensitiveness and receptivity for truth's sweet and bitter, which largely expresses itself in a psychological excitation, a clarity of vision, to such an extent that the conception of truth actually almost coincides with that of psychological perception and recognition. And secondly it consists in an understanding of disease, a certain affinity with it, outweighed by fundamental health, and an understanding of its productive significance.

As for the love of truth: the suffering, morally conditioned love of truth *as psychology*—that has its origin in Nietzsche's lofty school, where in fact the coincidence of "truth" and "psychological truth," of the knower with the psychologist, is striking indeed. His proud truthfulness, his very conception of intellectual honesty, his conscious and melancholy fearlessness in its service, his self-knowledge, self-crucifixion—all this has psychological intention and bearing. Never shall I forget the deepening, strengthening, formative effect upon my own powers produced by my acquaintance with Nietzsche's psychological agony. In *Tonio Kröger* the artist speaks of being "sick of knowledge." That is true Nietzsche language; and the youth's melancholy has reference to the Hamlet-like in Nietzsche's nature, in which his own mirrored itself: a nature called to knowledge without being genuinely born to it. These are the pangs and anguishes of youth, destined to be lightened and tranquilized as years flowed by and brought ripeness with them. But there has remained with me the desire for a psychological interpretation of knowledge and truth; I still equate them with psychology and feel the psychological will to truth as a desire for truth in general; still interpret psychology as truth in the most actual and courageous sense of the word. One would call the tendency a naturalistic one, I suppose, and ascribe it to a training in literary naturalism; it forms a precondition of receptivity for the natural science of the psyche—in other words, for what is known as psychoanalysis.

I spoke of a second bond between that science and the creative impulse: the understanding of disease, or, more precisely, of disease as an instrument of knowledge. That, too, one may derive from Nietzsche. He well knew what he owed to his morbid state, and on every page he seems to instruct us that there is no deeper knowledge without experience of disease, and that all heightened healthiness must be achieved by the route of illness. This attitude too may be referred to his experience; but it is bound up with the nature of the intellectual man in general, of the creative artist in particular, yes, with the nature of humanity and the human being, of which last of course the creative artist is an extreme expression. "*L'humanité*" says Victor Hugo "*s'affirme par l'infirmité.*" A say-

ing which frankly and proudly admits the delicate constitution of all higher humanity and culture and their connoisseurship in the realm of disease. Man has been called "*das kranke Tier*" because of the burden of strain and explicit difficulties laid upon him by his position between nature and spirit, between angel and brute. What wonder, then, that by the approach through abnormality we have succeeded in penetrating most deeply into the darkness of human nature; that the study of disease—that is to say, neurosis—has revealed itself as a first-class technique of anthropological research?

The literary artist should be the last person to be surprised at the fact. Sooner might he be surprised that he, considering his strong general and individual tendency, should have so late become aware of the close sympathetic relations which connected his own existence with psychoanalytic research and the lifework of Sigmund Freud. I realized this connection only at a time when his achievement was no longer thought of as merely a therapeutic method, whether recognized or disputed; when it had long since outgrown his purely medical implications and become a world movement which penetrated into every field of science and every domain of the intellect: literature, the history of art, religion and prehistory; mythology, folklore, pedagogy, and what not—thanks to the practical and constructive zeal of experts who erected a structure of more general investigation round the psychiatric and medical core. Indeed, it would be too much to say that I came to psychoanalysis. It came to me. Through the friendly interest of some younger workers in the field for what I had written, from *Little Herr Friedemann* to *Death in Venice*, *The Magic Mountain*, and the *Joseph* novels, it gave me to understand that in my way I "belonged"; it made me aware, as probably behoved it, of my own latent, preconscious sympathies; and when I began to occupy myself with the literature of psychoanalysis I recognized, arrayed in the ideas and the language of scientific exactitude, much that had long been familiar to me through my youthful mental experiences.

Perhaps you will kindly permit me to continue for a while in this autobiographical strain, and not take it amiss if instead of speaking of Freud I speak of myself. And indeed I scarcely trust

myself to speak *about* him. What new thing could I hope to say? But I shall also, quite explicitly, be speaking in his honor in speaking of myself, in telling you how profoundly and peculiarly certain experiences decisive for my development prepared me for the Freudian experience. More than once, and in many places, I have confessed to the profound, even shattering impression made upon me as a young man by contact with the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, to which then a monument was erected in the pages of *Buddenbrooks*. Here first, in the pessimism of a metaphysics already very strongly equipped on the natural-science side, I encountered the dauntless zeal for truth which stands for the moral aspect of the psychology of the unconscious. This metaphysics, in obscure revolt against centuries-old beliefs, preached the primacy of the instinct over mind and reason; it recognized the will as the core and the essential foundation of the world, in man as in all other created beings; and the intellect as secondary and accidental, servant of the will and its pale illuminant. This it preached not in malice, not in the antihuman spirit of the mind-hostile doctrines of today, but in the stern love of truth characteristic of the century which combated idealism out of love for the ideal. It was so sincere, that nineteenth century, that—through the mouth of Ibsen—it pronounced the lie, the lies of life, to be indispensable. Clearly there is a vast difference whether one assents to a lie out of sheer hatred of truth and the spirit or for the sake of that spirit, in bitter irony and anguished pessimism! Yet the distinction is not clear to everybody today.

Now, Freud, the psychologist of the unconscious, is a true son of the century of Schopenhauer and Ibsen—he was born in the middle of it. How closely related is his revolution to Schopenhauer's, not only in its content, but also in its moral attitude! His discovery of the great role played by the unconscious, the Id, in the soul-life of man challenged and challenges classical psychology, to which the consciousness and the psyche are one and the same, as offensively as once Schopenhauer's doctrine of the will challenged philosophical belief in reason and the intellect. Certainly the early devotee of *The World as Will and Idea* is at home in the admirable essay which is included in Freud's *New*

Introductory Essays in Psychoanalysis under the title "The Anatomy of the Mental Personality." It describes the soul-world of the unconscious, the Id, in language as strong, and at the same time in as coolly intellectual, objective, and professional a tone, as Schopenhauer might have used to describe his sinister kingdom of the will. "The domain of the Id," he says, "is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality; the little that we know of it we have learned through the study of dreams and of the formation of neurotic symptoms." He depicts it as a chaos, a melting pot of seething excitations. The Id, he thinks, is, so to speak, open toward the somatic, and receives thence into itself compulsions which there find psychic expression—in what substratum is unknown. From these impulses it receives its energy; but it is not organized, produces no collective will, merely the striving to achieve satisfaction for the impulsive needs operating under the pleasure principle. In it no laws of thought are valid, and certainly not the law of opposites. "Contradictory stimuli exist alongside each other without canceling each other out or even detracting from each other; at most they unite in compromise forms under the compulsion of the controlling economy for the release of energy." You perceive that this is a situation which, in the historical experience of our own day, can take the upper hand with the Ego, with a whole mass-Ego, thanks to a moral devastation which is produced by worship of the unconscious, the glorification of its dynamic as the only life-promoting force, the systematic glorification of the primitive and irrational. For the unconscious, the Id, is primitive and irrational, is pure dynamic. It knows no values, no good or evil, no morality. It even knows no time, no temporal flow, nor any effect of time upon its psychic process. "Wish stimuli," says Freud, "which have never overpassed the Id, and impressions which have been repressed into its depths, are virtually indestructible, they survive decade after decade as though they had just happened. They can only be recognized as belonging to the past, devalued and robbed of their charge of energy, by becoming conscious through the analytic procedure." And he adds that therein lies pre-eminently the healing effect of analytic treatment. We perceive accordingly how antipathetic deep analysis must be to an Ego which is

intoxicated by a worship of the unconscious to the point of being in a condition of subterranean dynamic. It is only too clear and understandable that such an Ego is deaf to analysis and that the name of Freud must not be mentioned in its hearing.

7 — As for the Ego itself, its situation is pathetic, well-nigh alarming. It is an alert, prominent, and enlightened little part of the Id—much as Europe is a small and lively province of the greater Asia. The Ego is that part of the Id which became modified by contact with the outer world; equipped for the reception and preservation of stimuli; comparable to the integument with which any piece of living matter surrounds itself. A very perspicuous biological picture. Freud writes indeed a very perspicuous prose, he is an artist of thought, like Schopenhauer, and like him a writer of European rank. The relation with the other world is, he says, decisive for the Ego, it is the Ego's task to represent the world to the Id—for its good! For without regard for the superior power of the outer world the Id, in its blind striving toward the satisfaction of its instincts, would not escape destruction. The Ego takes cognizance of the outer world, it is mindful, it honorably tries to distinguish the objectively real from whatever is an accretion from its inward sources of stimulation. It is entrusted by the Id with the lever of action; but between the impulse and the action it has interposed the delay of the thought process, during which it summons experience to its aid and thus possesses a certain regulative superiority over the pleasure principle which rules supreme in the unconscious, correcting it by means of the principle of reality. But even so, how feeble it is! Hemmed in between the unconscious, the outer world, and what Freud calls the Superego, it leads a pretty nervous and anguished existence. Its own dynamic is rather weak. It derives its energy from the Id and in general has to carry out the latter's behests. It is fain to regard itself as the rider and the unconscious as the horse. But many a time it is ridden by the unconscious; and I take leave to add what Freud's rational morality prevents him from saying, that under some circumstances it makes more progress by this illegitimate means.

But Freud's description of the Id and the Ego—is it not to a hair Schopenhauer's description of the Will and the Intellect, a

translation of the latter's metaphysics into psychology? So he who had been initiated into the metaphysics of Schopenhauer and in Nietzsche tasted the painful pleasure of psychology—he must needs have been filled with a sense of recognition and familiarity when first, encouraged thereto by its denizens, he entered the realms of psychoanalysis and looked about him.

He found too that his new knowledge had a strange and strong retroactive effect upon the old. After a sojourn in the world of Freud, how differently, in the light of one's new knowledge, does one re-read the reflections of Schopenhauer, for instance his great essay "Transcendent Speculations on Apparent Design in the Fate of the Individual"! And here I am about to touch upon the most profound and mysterious point of contact between Freud's natural-scientific world and Schopenhauer's philosophic one. For the essay I have named, a marvel of profundity and penetration, constitutes this point of contact. The pregnant and mysterious idea there developed by Schopenhauer is briefly this: that precisely as in a dream it is our own will that unconsciously appears as inexorable objective destiny, everything in it proceeding out of ourselves and each of us being the secret theater manager of our own dreams, so also in reality the great dream which a single essence, the will itself, dreams with us all, our fate, may be the product of our inmost selves, of our wills, and we are actually ourselves bringing about what seems to be happening to us. I have only briefly indicated here the content of the essay, for these representations are winged with the strongest and most sweeping powers of suggestion. But not only does the dream psychology which Schopenhauer calls to his aid bear an explicitly psychoanalytic character, even to the presence of the sexual argument and paradigm; but the whole complexus of thought is a philosophical anticipation of analytical conceptions, to a quite astonishing extent. For, to repeat what I said in the beginning, I see in the mystery of the unity of the Ego and the world, of being and happening, in the perception of the apparently objective and accidental as a matter of the soul's own contriving, the innermost core of psychoanalytic theory.

And here there occurs to me a phrase from the pen of C. J. Jung,

an able but somewhat ungrateful scion of the Freudian school, in his significant introduction to the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*. "It is so much more direct, striking, impressive, and thus convincing," he says, "to see how it happens to me than to see how I do it." A bold, even an extravagant statement, plainly betraying the calmness with which in a certain school of psychology certain things are regarded which even Schopenhauer considered prodigiously daring speculation. Would this unmasking of the "happening" as in reality "doing" be conceivable without Freud? Never! It owes him everything. It is weighted down with assumptions, it could not be understood, it could never have been written, without all that analysis has brought to light about slips of tongue and pen, the whole field of human error, the retreat into illness, the psychology of accidents, the self-punishment compulsion—in short, all the wizardry of the unconscious. Just as little, moreover, would that close-packed sentence of Jung's, including its psychological premises, have been possible without Schopenhauer's adventurous pioneering speculation. Perhaps this is the moment, my friends, to indulge on this festive occasion in a little polemic against Freud himself. He does not esteem philosophy very highly. His scientific exactitude does not permit him to regard it as a science. He reproaches it with imagining that it can present a continuous and consistent picture of the world; with overestimating the objective value of logical operations; with believing in intuitions as a source of knowledge and with indulging in positively animistic tendencies, in that it believes in the magic of words and the influence of thought upon reality. But would philosophy really be thinking too highly of itself on these assumptions? Has the world ever been changed by anything save by thought and its magic vehicle the Word? I believe that in actual fact philosophy ranks before and above the natural sciences and that all method and exactness serve its intuitions and its intellectual and historical will. In the last analysis it is always a matter of the *quod erat demonstrandum*. Scientific freedom from assumptions is or should be a moral fact. But intellectually it is, as Freud points out, probably an illusion. One might strain the point and say that science has never made a

discovery without being authorized and encouraged thereto by philosophy.

All this by the way. But it is in line with my general intention to pause a little longer at the sentence which I quoted from Jung. In this essay and also as a general method which he uses by preference, Jung applies analytical evidence to form a bridge between Occidental thought and Oriental esoteric. Nobody has focused so sharply as he the Schopenhauer-Freud perception that "the giver of all given conditions resides in ourselves—a truth which despite all evidence in the greatest as well as in the smallest things *never* becomes conscious, though it is only too often necessary, even indispensable, that it should be." A great and costly change, he thinks, is needed before we understand how the world is "given" by the nature of the soul; for man's animal nature strives against seeing himself as the maker of his own conditions. It is true that the East has always shown itself stronger than the West in the conquest of our animal nature, and we need not be surprised to hear that in its wisdom it conceives even the gods among the "given conditions" originating from the soul and one with her, light and reflection of the human soul. This knowledge, which, according to the *Book of the Dead*, one gives to the deceased to accompany him on his way, is a paradox to the Occidental mind, conflicting with its sense of logic, which distinguishes between subject and object and refuses to have them coincide or make one proceed from the other. True, European mysticism has been aware of such attitudes, and Angelus Silesius said:

I know that without me God cannot live a moment;
If I am destroyed He must give up the ghost.

But on the whole a psychological conception of God, an idea of the godhead which is not pure condition, absolute reality, but one with the soul and bound up with it, must be intolerable to Occidental religious sense—it would be equivalent to abandoning the idea of God.

Yet religion—perhaps even etymologically—essentially implies a bond. In Genesis we have talk of the bond (covenant) between God and man, the psychological basis of which I have attempted

to give in the mythological novel *Joseph and His Brothers*. Perhaps my hearers will be indulgent if I speak a little about my own work; there may be some justification for introducing it here in this hour of formal encounter between creative literature and the psychoanalytic. It is strange—and perhaps strange not only to me—that in this work there obtains precisely that psychological theology which the scholar ascribes to Oriental esoteric. This Abram is in a sense the father of God. He perceived and brought Him forth; His mighty qualities, ascribed to Him by Abram, were probably His original possession, Abram was not their inventor, yet in a sense he was, by virtue of his recognizing them and therewith, by taking thought, making them real. God's mighty qualities—and thus God Himself—are indeed something objective, exterior to Abram; but at the same time they are in him and of him as well; the power of his own soul is at moments scarcely to be distinguished from them, it consciously interpenetrates and fuses with them—and such is the origin of the bond which then the Lord strikes with Abram, as the explicit confirmation of an inward fact. The bond, it is stated, is made in the interest of both, to the end of their common sanctification. Need human and need divine here entwine until it is hard to say whether it was the human or the divine that took the initiative. In any case the arrangement shows that the holiness of man and the holiness of God constituted a twofold process, one part being most intimately bound up with the other. Wherefore else, one asks, should there be a bond at all?

The soul as “giver of the given”—yes, my friends, I am well aware that in the novel this conception reaches an ironic pitch which is not authorized either in Oriental wisdom or in psychological perception. But there is something thrilling about the unconscious and only later discovered harmony. Shall I call it the power of suggestion? But sympathy would be a better word: a kind of intellectual affinity, of which naturally psychoanalysis was earlier aware than was I, and which proceeded out of those literary appreciations which I owed to it at an earlier stage. The latest of these was an offprint of an article which appeared in *Imago*, written by a Viennese scholar of the Freudian school, under the

title "On the Psychology of the Older School of Biography." The rather dry title gives no indication of the remarkable contents. The writer shows how the older and simpler type of biography and in particular the written lives of artists, nourished and conditioned by popular legend and tradition, assimilate, as it were, the life of the subject to the conventionalized stock-in-trade of biography in general, thus imparting a sort of sanction to their own performance and establishing its genuineness; making it authentic in the sense of "as it always was" and "as it has been written." For man sets store by recognition, he likes to find the old in the new, the typical in the individual. From that recognition he draws a sense of the familiar in life, whereas if it painted itself as entirely new, singular in time and space, without any possibility of resting upon the known, it could only bewilder and alarm. The question, then, which is raised by the essay, is this: can any line be sharply and unequivocally drawn between the formal stock-in-trade of legendary biography and the characteristics of the single personality—in other words, between the typical and the individual? A question negated by its very statement. For the truth is that life is a mingling of the individual elements and the formal stock-in-trade; a mingling in which the individual, as it were, only lifts his head above the formal and impersonal elements. Much that is extrapersonal, much unconscious identification, much that is conventional and schematic, is nonetheless decisive for the experience not only of the artist but of the human being in general. "Many of us," says the writer of the article, " 'live' today a biographical type, the destiny of a class or rank or calling. The freedom in the shaping of the human being's life is obviously connected with that bond which we term 'lived *vita*.' " And then, to my delight, but scarcely to my surprise, he begins to cite from *Joseph*, the fundamental motif of which he says is precisely this idea of the "lived life," life as succession, as a moving in others' steps, as identification—such as Joseph's teacher, Eliezer, practices with droll solemnity. For in him time is canceled and all the Eliezers of the past gather to shape the Eliezer of the present, so that he speaks in the first person of that Elie-

zer who was Abram's servant, though he was far from being the same man.

I must admit that I find the train of thought extraordinarily convincing. The essay indicates the precise point at which the psychological interest passes over into the mythical. It makes it clear that the typical is actually the mythical, and that one may as well say "lived myth" as "lived life." But the mythus as lived is the epic idea embodied in my novel; and it is plain to me that when as a novelist I took the step in my subject matter from the bourgeois and individual to the mythical and typical my personal connection with the analytic field passed into its acute stage. The mythical interest is as native to psychoanalysis as the psychological interest is to all creative writing. Its penetration into the childhood of the individual soul is at the same time a penetration into the childhood of mankind, into the primitive and mythical. Freud has told us that for him all natural science, medicine, and psychotherapy were a lifelong journey round and back to the early passion of his youth for the history of mankind, for the origins of religion and morality—an interest which at the height of his career broke out to such magnificent effect in *Totem and Taboo*. The word *Tiefenpsychologie* ("deep" psychology) has a temporal significance; the primitive foundations of the human soul are likewise primitive time, they are those profound time-sources where the myth has its home and shapes the primeval norms and forms of life. For the myth is the foundation of life; it is the timeless schema, the pious formula into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious. Certainly when a writer has acquired the habit of regarding life as mythical and typical there comes a curious heightening of his artist temper, a new refreshment to his perceiving and shaping powers which otherwise occurs much later in life; for while in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one. What is gained is an insight into the higher truth depicted in the actual; a smiling knowledge of the eternal, the ever-being and authentic; a knowledge of the schema in which and according to which the supposed individual lives, unaware, in his naïve belief in himself as unique in space and

time, of the extent to which his life is but formula and repetition and his path marked out for him by those who trod it before him. His character is a mythical role which the actor just emerged from the depths to the light plays in the illusion that it is his own and unique, that he, as it were, has invented it all himself, with a dignity and security of which his supposed unique individuality in time and space is not the source, but rather which he creates out of his deeper consciousness in order that something which was once founded and legitimized shall again be represented and once more for good or ill, whether nobly or basely, in any case after its own kind conduct itself according to pattern. Actually, if his existence consisted merely in the unique and the present, he would not know how to conduct himself at all; he would be confused, helpless, unstable in his own self-regard, would not know which foot to put foremost or what sort of face to put on. His dignity and security lie all unconsciously in the fact that with him something timeless has once more emerged into the light and become present; it is a mythical value added to the otherwise poor and valueless single character; it is native worth, because its origin lies in the unconscious.

Such is the gaze which the mythically oriented artist bands upon the phenomena about him—an ironic and superior gaze, as you can see, for the mythical knowledge resides in the gazer and not in that at which he gazes. But let us suppose that the mythical point of view could become subjective; that it could pass over into the active Ego and become conscious there, proudly and darkly yet joyously, of its recurrence and its typicality, could celebrate its role and realize its own value exclusively in the knowledge that it was a fresh incarnation of the traditional upon earth. One might say that such a phenomenon alone could be the “lived myth”; nor should we think that it is anything novel or unknown. The life in the myth, life as a sacred repetition, is a historical form of life, for the man of ancient times lived thus. An instance is the figure of the Egyptian Cleopatra, which is Ishtar, Astarte, Aphrodite in person. Bachofen, in his description of the cult of Bacchus, the Dionysiac religion, regards the Egyptian queen as the consummate picture of a Dionysiac *stimula*; and according to Plutarch it

was far more her erotic intellectual culture than her physical charms that entitled her to represent the female as developed into the earthly embodiment of Aphrodite. But her Aphrodite nature, her role of Hathor-Isis, is not only objective, not only a treatment of her by Plutarch or Bachofen; it was the content of her subjective existence as well, she lived the part. This we can see by the manner of her death: she is supposed to have killed herself by laying an asp upon her bosom. But the snake was the familiar of Ishtar, the Egyptian Isis, who is represented clad in a garment of scales; also there exists a statuette of Ishtar holding a snake to her bosom. So that if Cleopatra's death was as the legend represents, the manner of it was a manifestation of her mythical Ego. Moreover, did she not adopt the falcon hood of the goddess Isis and adorn herself with the insignia of Hathor, the cow's horns with the crescent moon between? And name her two children by Mark Antony Helios and Selene? No doubt she was a very significant figure indeed—significant in the antique sense, that she was well aware who she was and in whose footsteps she trod!

The Ego of antiquity and its consciousness of itself was different from our own, less exclusive, less sharply defined. It was, as it were, open behind; it received much from the past and by repeating it gave it presentness again. The Spanish scholar Ortega y Gasset puts it that the man of antiquity, before he did anything, took a step backwards, like the bullfighter who leaps back to deliver the mortal thrust. He searched the past for a pattern into which he might slip as into a diving bell, and being thus at once disguised and protected might rush upon his present problem. Thus his life was in a sense a reanimation, an archaizing attitude. But it is just this life as reanimation that is the life as myth. Alexander walked in the footsteps of Miltiades; the ancient biographers of Cæsar were convinced, rightly or wrongly, that he took Alexander as his prototype. But such "imitation" meant far more than we mean by the word today. It was a mythical identification, peculiarly familiar to antiquity; but it is operative far into modern times, and at all times is psychically possible. How often have we not been told that the figure of Napoleon was cast in the antique mold! He regretted that the mentality of the time forbade him to

give himself out for the son of Jupiter Amon, in imitation of Alexander. But we need not doubt that—at least at the period of his Eastern exploits—he mythically confounded himself with Alexander; while after he turned his face westwards he is said to have declared: “I am Charlemagne.” Note that: not “I am like Charlemagne” or “My situation is like Charlemagne’s,” but quite simply: “I am he.” That is the formulation of the myth. Life, then—at any rate, significant life—was in ancient times the reconstitution of the myth in flesh and blood; it referred to and appealed to the myth; only through it, through reference to the past, could it approve itself as genuine and significant. The myth is the legitimization of life; only through and in its does life find self-awareness, sanction, consecration. Cleopatra fulfilled her Aphrodite character even unto death—and can one live and die more significantly or worthily than in the celebration of the myth? We have only to think of Jesus and His life, which was lived in order that that which was written might be fulfilled. It is not easy to distinguish between His own consciousness and the conventionalizations of the evangelists. But His word on the cross, about the ninth hour, that “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” was evidently not in the least an outburst of despair and disillusionment; but on the contrary a lofty messianic sense of self. For the phrase is not original, not a spontaneous outcry. It stands at the beginning of the Twenty-second Psalm, which from one end to the other is an announcement of the Messiah. Jesus was quoting, and the quotation meant: “Yes, it is I!” Precisely thus did Cleopatra quote when she took the asp to her breast to die; and again the quotation meant: “Yes, it is I!”

Let us consider for a moment the word “celebration” which I used in this connection. It is a pardonable, even a proper usage. For life in the myth, life, so to speak, in quotation, is a kind of celebration, in that it is a making present of the past, it becomes a religious act, the performance by a celebrant of a prescribed procedure; it becomes a feast. For a feast is an anniversary, a renewal of the past in the present. Every Christmas the world-saving Babe is born again on earth, to suffer, to die, and to arise. The feast is the abrogation of time, an event, a solemn narrative

being played out conformably to an immemorial pattern; the events in it take place not for the first time, but ceremonially according to the prototype. It achieves presentness as feasts do, recurring in time with their phases and hours following on each other in time as they did in the original occurrence. In antiquity each feast was essentially a dramatic performance, a mask; it was the scenic reproduction, with priests as actors, of stories about the gods—as for instance the life and sufferings of Osiris. The Christian Middle Ages had their mystery play, with heaven, earth, and the torments of hell—just as we have it later in Goethe's *Faust*; they had their carnival farce, their folk mime. The artist eye has a mythical slant upon life, which makes it look like a farce, like a theatrical performance of a prescribed feast, like a Punch and Judy epic, wherein mythical character puppets reel off a plot abiding from past time and now again present in a jest. It only lacks that this mythical slant pass over and become subjective in the performers themselves, become a festival and mythical consciousness of part and play, for an epic to be produced such as that in the first volume of the *Joseph and His Brothers* series, particularly in the chapter "The Great Hoaxing." There a mythical recurrent farce is tragically played by personages all of whom we know in whose steps they tread: Isaac, Esau, and Jacob; and who act out the cruel and grotesque tale of how Esau the Red is led by the nose and cheated of his birthright to the huge delight of all the bystanders. Joseph too is another such celebrant of life; with charming mythological hocus-pocus he enacts in his own person the Tammuz-Osiris myth, "bringing to pass" anew the story of the mangled, buried, and arisen god, playing his festival game with that which mysteriously and secretly shapes life out of its own depths—the unconscious. The mystery of the metaphysician and psychologist, that the soul is the giver of all given conditions, becomes in Joseph easy, playful, blithe—like a consummately artistic performance by a fencer or juggler. It reveals his *infantile* nature—and the word I have used betrays how closely, though seeming to wander so far afield, we have kept to the subject of our evening's homage.

Infantilism—in other words, regression to childhood—what a

role this genuinely psychoanalytic element plays in all our lives! What a large share it has in shaping the life of a human being; operating, indeed, in just the way I have described: as mythical identification, as survival, as a treading in footprints already made! The bond with the father, the imitation of the father, the game of being the father, and the transference to father-substitute pictures of a higher and more developed type—how these infantile traits work upon the life of the individual to mark and shape it! I use the word “shape,” for to me in all seriousness the happiest, most pleasurable element of what we call education (*Bildung*), the shaping of the human being, is just this powerful influence of admiration and love, this childish identification with a father-image elected out of profound affinity. The artist in particular, a passionately childlike and play-possessed being, can tell us of the mysterious yet after all obvious effect of such infantile imitation upon his own life, his productive conduct of a career which after all is often nothing but a reanimation of the hero under very different temporal and personal conditions and with very different, shall we say childish, means. The *imitatio* Goethe, with its Werther and Wilhelm Meister stages, its old-age period of *Faust* and *Diwan*, can still shape and mythically mold the life of an artist—rising out of his unconscious, yet playing over—as is the artist way—into a smiling, childlike, and profound awareness.

The Joseph of the novel is an artist, playing with his *imitatio dei* upon the unconscious string; and I know not how to express the feelings which possess me—something like a joyful sense of divination of the future—when I indulge in this encouragement of the unconscious to play, to make itself fruitful in a serious product, in a narrational meeting of psychology and myth, which is at the same time a celebration of the meeting between poetry and analysis.

And now this word “future”: I have used it in the title of my address, because it is this idea, the idea of the future, which I involuntarily like best to connect with the name of Freud. But even as I have been speaking I have been asking myself whether I have not been guilty of a cause of confusion; whether—from what I have said up to now—a better title might not have been

something like "Freud and the Myth." And yet I rather cling to the combination of name and word and I would like to justify and make clear its relation to what I have so far said. I make bold to believe that in that novel so kin to the Freudian world, making as it does the light of psychology play upon the myth, there lie hidden seeds and elements of a new and coming sense of our humanity. And no less firmly do I hold that we shall one day recognize in Freud's lifework the cornerstone for the building of a new anthropology and therewith of a new structure, to which many stones are being brought up today, which shall be the future dwelling of a wiser and freer humanity. This physicianly psychologist will, I make no doubt at all, be honored as the pathfinder toward a humanism of the future, which we dimly divine and which will have experienced much that the earlier humanism knew not of. It will be a humanism standing in a different relation to the powers of the lower world, the unconscious, the Id: a relation bolder, freer, blither, productive of a riper art than any possible in our neurotic, fear-ridden, hate-ridden world. Freud is of the opinion that the significance of psychoanalysis as a science of the unconscious will in the future far outrank its value as a therapeutic method. But even as a science of the unconscious it is a therapeutic method, in the grand style, a method overarching the individual case. Call this, if you choose, a poet's utopia; but the thought is after all not unthinkable that the resolution of our great fear and our great hate, their conversion into a different relation to the unconscious which shall be more the artist's, more ironic and yet not necessarily irreverent, may one day be due to the healing effect of this very science.

The analytic revelation is a revolutionary force. With it a blithe skepticism has come into the world, a mistrust which unmasks all the schemes and subterfuges of our own souls. Once roused and on the alert, it cannot be put to sleep again. It infiltrates life, undermines its raw naïveté, takes from it the strain of its own ignorance, de-emotionalizes it, as it were, inculcates the taste for understatement, as the English call it—for the deflated rather than for the inflated word, for the cult which exerts its influence by moderation, by modesty. Modesty—what a beautiful word! In the

German it originally had to do with knowing and only later got its present meaning; while the Latin word from which the English comes means a way of doing—in short, both together give us almost the sense of the French *savoir faire*—to know how to do. May we hope that this may be the fundamental temper of that more blithely objective and peaceful world which the science of the unconscious may be called to usher in?

Its mingling of the pioneer with the physicianly spirit justifies such a hope. Freud once called his theory of dreams “a bit of scientific new-found land won from superstition and mysticism.” The word “won” expresses the colonizing spirit and significance of his work. “Where Id was, shall be Ego,” he epigrammatically says. And he calls analysis a cultural labor comparable to the draining of the Zuider Zee. Almost in the end the traits of the venerable man merge into the lineaments of the gray-haired Faust, whose spirit urges him

to shut the imperious sea from the shore away,
Set narrower bounds to the broad water's waste.

Then open I to many millions space
Where they may live, not safe-secure, but free
And active. And such a busy swarming I would see
Standing amid free folk on a free soil.

The free folk are the people of a future freed from fear and hate, and ripe for peace.

WILLIAM BARRETT

Writers and Madness

*THE ANCIENTS—THE POWER TO
CONVINCE—AUTHENTICITY—SWIFT*

IS MY TITLE extreme? It is, if you will, just the same subject that has been very much discussed recently under the titles "Art and Neurosis," "Art and Anxiety," etc. But I choose the more ancient and extreme term precisely to maintain continuity with all the older instances. Is anything born *ex nihilo*, much less a phenomenon so profound and disturbing as that estranged neurotic, the modern writer? Even when the poet existed in his most unalienated condition—in ancient Greece—the similarity of madness and inspiration was the common saying; and Plato did not invent but only gave literary formulation to the belief about the poet's madness. Pause for a moment over this extraordinary paradox. They sat on sacred ground, precinct of the god, the day and drama were surrounded by all the occasions and overtones of religion, the myth known and on the whole taken as true, and yet. . . . And yet this audience too must exact a terrible price of its poet before they can take him seriously. A secret guilt per-

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haps? As they sat in broad daylight indulging their collective fantasy, pretending to believe that what was before their eyes was in fact something else, did an uneasy stirring at this indulgence drive them to exact from their poet in revenge the penalty of madness-inspiration? But what, in any case, we do know is this: that even when dealing with myths whose form and details were completely laid down for him, the Greek poet had to launch out into this sea (of "madness," if we believe Plato) in order to return to pour his own personal being into the preformed mold. Otherwise, his play could not have convinced an audience that already assumed their myth as a matter of fact—such is the paradox from which we start!

Everything Swift wrote, Leslie Stephen says with penetrating good sense, is interesting because it is the man himself. (If this is true of many other writers, there is on the other hand a special and compelling sense in which it holds of Swift—another reason for my finding his case so apposite.) Does it look as if I were only about to say, with Buffon, "the style is the man"? But "style" does not say enough, and it is not enough to remain happy with the judicious aphorism or with Stephen's judicious critical observation. The modern critic cannot rest easy with this eighteenth-century piece of astuteness, which long ago passed into the stock of our critical assumptions; we begin to know too much and we must dig mines beneath its truth.

But it is well to begin from such broad and obvious data of criticism (instances of which we could multiply indefinitely) for we may now pass on to the more complex and really monumental example provided us by James Joyce. In his *Portrait of the Artist* Joyce develops a theory of literary creation, anchored on the metaphysics of St. Thomas but essentially expressing the Flaubertian view of the writer as a god who remains above and beyond his creation which he manipulates as he wills. But in *Finnegans Wake* the universal human symbol of the writer has now become the infant Earwicker twin scrawling with his own excrement on the floor! (Between the two, somewhere near the midpoint of this remarkable evolution, Stephen Dedalus declares, in the famous

discussion of Shakespeare in *Ulysses*, that the writer, setting forth from his door for the encounter with experience, meets only himself on the doorstep). If Joyce is the great case of a rigorous and logical development among modern writers, each step forward carrying the immense weight of his total commitment and concentration, we are not wrong then to find in this changing portrait of the artist a measure of how far he has matured as man and writer from the once youthful and arrogant aesthete. And if we will not learn from our own experience, do we not remain formalists toward literature only at the expense of neglecting Joyce's far deeper experience?

But in fact we already know there is no escape from ourselves. Existence is a dense plenum into which we are plunged, and every thought, wish, and fear is "overdetermined," coming to be under the infinite pressures within that plenum of all other thoughts, wishes, and fears. Fingerprints and footprints are our own, and Darwin has pointed out that our inner organs differ from person to person as much as our faces. The signature of ourselves is written over all our dreams like the criminal's fingerprints across his crime. The writer, no more than any other man, can hope to escape this inescapable density of particularity. But his difference is precisely that he does not merely submit but insists upon this as his fate. It is *his own* voice which he wishes to resound in the arena of the world. He knows that the work must be his, and to the degree that it is less than his, to the degree that he has not risked the maximum of his being in it, he has missed the main chance, his only chance. The scientist too may insist on the personal prerogative of discovery: he wants the new element, planet, or equation to bear his name; but if in this claim for prestige he responds to one of the deepest urges of the ego, it is only that this prestige itself may come to attend his person through the public world of other men; and it is not in the end his own being that is exhibited or his own voice that is heard in the learned report to the Academy.

So we have come quickly to the point, and may now let the categories of *authentic* and *unauthentic* out of the bag. I am not very happy about the terms, I wish we had better in English, but

it should be clear from our instances so far that they are not really new notions, and that they do come forth now at the real pinch of the subject matter. If a certain amount of faddism has recently and regrettably become attached to their use, they have on the other hand also become obsessive for the modern mind—a recommendation which we, existing historically, cannot help finding a little persuasive. The Marxist will not fail to point out that a highly developed technology, which is not directed toward human ends but capable on the other hand of overrunning all areas of the social life, has plunged us into this civilization of the slick imitation, celluloid and cellophane, kitsch and chromium plating, in the morass of which we come inevitably to speak of “the real thing” and “the real right thing” with an almost religious fervor. And he will go on to explain then why the category of authenticity should play such a crucial role in modern existential thought. He would be right, of course, but he ought also to drop his bucket into the deeper waters of the well. One deeper fact is that modern man has lost the religious sanctions which had once surrounded his life at every moment with a recognizable test capable of telling him whether he was living “in the truth” or not; Hegel drew a map of the divided consciousness, and Freud explored it empirically beyond anything Hegel ever dreamed, showing us, among other things, that Venus is the goddess of lies; and so we come, as creatures of the divided and self-alienated consciousness, to wrestle with the problem of how we are to live truthfully. But if these categories have become historically inevitable, and we borrow their formulation from existentialist philosophers, we have on the other hand to insist that it is not these philosophers who can tell us, after all, how authenticity is to be achieved either in art or life. Freud, not Heidegger, holds the key. The mechanism by which any work of art becomes authentic—flooded in every nook and cranny with the personal being of the author—can only be revealed by the searchlight of psychoanalytic exploration.

How then is authenticity—this strange and central power of a fantasy to *convince* us—achieved? A first and principal point: it seems to involve a fairly complete, if temporary, identification with the objects of fantasy. The difference between Kafka and most of

his imitators becomes a *crucial* instance here. When Kafka writes about a hero who has become an insect, about a mouse or an animal in a burrow, he is, during the course of the lucid hallucination which is his story, that insect, mouse, or animal; it is he himself who lives and moves through the passages and chambers of his burrow; while his imitators, even when they are fairly successful, strike us as simply using so much clever machinery borrowed from him and often more ingeniously baroque than his, but which lacks precisely that authenticity of identification. But this identification with the objects of fantasy is also in the direction of insanity; and perhaps this is just what the ancients knew: that the poet in inspiration ventures as close to that undrawn border as he can, for the closer he goes the more vitality he brings back with him. The game would seem to be to go as close as possible without crossing over.

Now imagine, for a moment, Swift in the modern pattern. After the downfall of the Harley ministry he retires to his wretched, dirty doghole and prison of Ireland, has a nervous breakdown, a crack-up, is patched together by several physicians and analysts, continues in circulation thereafter by drinking hard but spacing his liquor carefully, and dies at an earlier age of cirrhosis of the liver. Shall we call this: Living on the American Plan? It is the violence of the new world, after all, that has made a system of violent drinking. Now to be drunk and to go mad are both ways of overcoming the world. If in the interests of human economy we are left no choice but to prefer the American Pattern, would we not, however, feel a little cheated had Swift's actual history been different? Before the ravening gaze of his miserable species he flings down his madness as the gage of his commitment and passion, and it has now become an inseparable part of the greatness of the human figure that rises out of history toward us.

When Simon Dedalus Delany, amiable and easygoing, remarked of a mutual acquaintance that "He was a nice old gentleman," Swift retorted, "There is no such thing as a nice old gentleman; any man who had a body or mind worth a farthing would have burned them out long ago." Does not this become his own comment on his eventual madness? The man who retorted thus, it is clear, lived

with his whole being flung continuously toward the future at the end of the long corridor of which was the placid if disordered chamber of madness. To have gone mad in a certain way might almost seem one mode of living authentically: one has perhaps looked at the world without illusion and with passion. Nothing permits us to separate this life from this writing: if the extraordinary images the biography provides us—the old man exclaiming, over and over again, “I am what I am,” or sitting placidly for hours before his Bible open on Job’s lament, “let the day perish wherein I was born,”—if these move us as symbols of a great human ruin, they are also the background against which we must read the last book of *Gulliver*. The game is to go as close as possible without crossing over: poor Gulliver the traveler has now slipped across the border into the country of the mad, but this journey itself was only a continuation of the Voyage among the Houyhnhnms. A moment comes and the desire to escape takes on a definite and terrible clothing, and the whole being is shaken by the convulsions of what we may call the totem urge—the wish to be an animal. Rat’s foot, crow’s skin, anything out of this human form! The Ainu dances and growls and is a bear, the Bororo Indians chatter and become parakeets; Swift wanted to be a horse, a beautiful and gentle animal—and probably nobler on the whole than most human beings. This is the madness already present in *Gulliver*.

We do not mean to deny all the other necessary qualities that are there: the once laughter-loving Dean, lover of *la bagatelle*, King of Triflers, the great eighteenth-century wit, the accomplished classicist. Precisely these things give Swift the great advantage over a writer like Céline, whose rage is, by comparison, choking and inarticulate—like a man spitting and snarling in our face and in the end only *about* himself, so that we are not always sure whether we are being moved by literature or by a mere document of some fearful human extremity. What for the moment I am calling “madness,” the perhaps simpler thing the Greeks called “madness,” must somehow flow freely along the paths where all men can admire. If it erupts like a dam bursting it only inundates and swamps the neighboring fields; conducted into more indirect and

elaborate paths, it irrigates and flows almost hidden to the eye. The flow from the unconscious of writer to reader would seem, then, to be more effective precisely where the circuit is longer and less direct, and capable therefore of encompassing ampler territory in its sweep. Lucidity, logic, form, objective dramatization, traditional style, taste—all these are channels into which the writer must let his anguish flow. And the denser his literary situation, the more he is surrounded by a compact and articulate tradition, the more chances he can take in casting himself adrift. But whatever Swift's advantages in literary and moral milieu, we cannot forget that he himself lived to write his own epitaph and in this final summing-up had the last word on the once laughter-loving Dean. And it is just his *saeva indignatio*—the mad wrath which, as he said to Delany, did "eat his flesh and consume his spirits"—that establishes the deeper authenticity of *Gulliver* which separates it from any other production of eighteenth-century wit. He himself as Gulliver towers over his Lilliputian enemies, and flees from the disgusting humans into the quiet stables of the horses. How far his madness had already taken him, he could scarcely have guessed, for it had unconsciously carried him, an unquestioning Christian, for the moment outside Christianity: the rational and tranquil Houyhnhnms do not need a Messiah's blood and a historically revealed religion in order to be saved, while the Yahoos could not possibly be redeemed by any savior. Swift might not have gone mad after writing *Gulliver*, but much of the power of that book comes from the fact that he was already on the road.

Once a writer imposes his greatness on us he imposes his figure totally, and we then read every scrap and scribble against the whole, and we will not find it strange that Joyce should invoke even the scrawling of the Earwicker twin as part of the image of Everymanthewriter. The man who wrote the charming prattle of the *Journal to Stella* is the same who comes to howl at bay before the human race. In his life he made two bluestockings love him desperately (a significant choice this, that they should be bluestockings; but one, to his surprise, turned out, as sometimes happens, a very passionate bluestocking); and one he loved all his

life long. In the simple *Prayers for Stella*, sublimating, he gropes, touches, fondles her in God. What happened beyond this we do not know. But we need no very fanciful imagination to guess the frustration which produces that mingled disgust and fascination at the biology of the female body. He did more, however, than release this into a few scatological verses about milady at and on her toilet; he was able to project his frustration and rage into the helpless Irish face about him, the insouciant Saxon face, churchmen, bishops, Lord Mayors, quacks, and pedants; "the corruptions and villainies of men in power"; and through these into a total vision of the human condition.

Here at last we come close to the secret: if one characteristic of neurosis is always a displacement somewhere, then perhaps the test of a writer's achievement may be precisely the extent and richness of displacement he is able to effect. In the process of literary expression, the neurotic mass acquires energies which are directed toward reality and seek their satisfaction in reality. As the writer displaces the neurotic mass further afield he is led to incorporate larger and larger areas of experience into his vision. Everything begins to appear then *as if* the world he pictures were itself sufficient to generate this vision (which we may know, in fact, to have been rather the product of quite unconscious compulsions and conflicts); *as if* the ego, really master in its own house, were simply responding appropriately to the world as seen in the book. Thus the peculiar sense of conquest and liberation that follows literary creation cannot be analyzed solely as that fulfillment of wishes which normally occurs in daydreaming or fantasy. Why in that case would it be necessary to complete the literary work at all? And why should the liberation it gives be so much more powerful and durable? No; this conquest is also one for the ego itself, which now seems momentarily to have absorbed the unconscious into itself so that the neurotic disgust itself appears an appropriate response to reality. And if this is an illusion from the analyst's point of view, it may not always be an illusion from the moralist's point of view. The world as it appears in Swift's writings is, in the end, adequate to his madness.

POWER AND GUILT

Now Swift's (unlike Cowper's, to cite another literary madman) was a very strong ego, and the fact that he broke in old age only tells us how great were the visions, tensions, and repressions he had to face. We do not know enough to establish his "case," but we know enough to say that his madness probably did not have its source in the literary condition at all—however much incipient madness may have informed and made powerful his writings.

Do we build too much on his example then? Perhaps; but his figure, in its broad strong outlines (and the very simplicity of these outlines is to our advantage here), takes such a grip on the imagination that, pursuing this rather nocturnal meditation, I am loath to let him drop. He has taken us so far already that it seems worth-while to journey a little way with him still into the darkness.

Certainly there is nothing, or very little, about Swift to make him a modern figure. He sits so solidly amid the prejudices and virtues of his age that we search in vain for any ideas in him that would seem to anticipate us. He was a man of parts rather than of ideas; and his very "rationality" is a kind of eighteenth-century prejudice, having little in common with what we struggle toward as our own, or even what the same century later in France was to discover so triumphantly as its own. He lived before modern political alternatives became very real or meaningful, and only his human hatred of the abuses of power might connect him remotely with some of our own attitudes. As a literary man, he is at the farthest distance from that neurotic specialist, the modern litterateur; he is not even a professional literary man in the sense of his contemporary, Pope, much less in the sense of the consecrated *rentier*, Flaubert. Thus we have no quarrel at all with certain professorial critics who point out that Swift was primarily interested in power and that he came by writing as an instrument of power or simply as a diversion. (What an unhappy conclusion, though, if we thought we had therefore to exclude him from something called "literature"!) And we might even go along a certain way with the generous hint of these critics that the frustration of his

desires for power explains both his misanthropy and final insanity.

But does not logic teach us that an induction is strengthened more by a confirming instance further afield? and which at first glance might not seem to fall altogether under the class in question? And if Swift, who sits so solidly in his own age, leads us, when we but plunge deeply enough, into the world of the modern writer, should we not feel all the more assured that we have got at least a little below the surface? Already, beneath the solid outlines of his eighteenth-century figure, I begin to descry the shadows and depths of a *psychic type*, the writer—which has emerged, to be sure, spectacularly only in the two following centuries.

Now the trouble with the professors (and not only when they censure Swift for his craving for power) is that they have unconsciously created a figure of the writer in their own image: a well-bred person with well-tubbed and scrubbed motives, who approaches something specialized and disinterested that they call "literature" as if his function in the end were merely to provide them with books to teach. Perhaps the great writers themselves have unwittingly helped toward this deception? Has any one of them ever told us why he had to become a writer? They tell us instead: "To hold a mirror up to nature"; "To carry a mirror dawdling down a lane"; "To forge the uncreated conscience of my race"; etc., etc.—great blazons of triumph, formulae of their extraordinary achievement, before which we forget even to ask why they had to become writers. The great writer is the victorious suitor who has captured a beautiful bride in an incomparable marriage. There seems almost no point in asking him why he had to love and seek marriage: his reasons seem all too abundant, he has only to point to the incomparable attractions of his beloved. He has lost his private compulsions in the general—in the positive and admirable qualities, known to all men, of the thing achieved. (The Kierkegaardians, by the way, should remind themselves that life must be just such a conquest and appropriation of universals.) But life does not contain only such happy bridegrooms, otherwise we might never know all the enormities and paradoxes of love; and if there were only great geniuses among writers, perhaps we might never know this other truth: the compulsions and paradoxes

on the dark side of their calling—which they, the great ones, could afford to forget in the daylight blaze of their triumph.

The mistake is not to have invoked the idea of power but, once invoked, not to have seen it through: we have but to pursue it far enough and we can find it present everywhere in Swift's writings, and indeed the central impulse of his prose itself (perhaps the best in English). What is that stripped and supple syntax but the design of greatest possible economy and force, by which he launches each sentence at its mark like a potent and well-aimed missile? (And each missile thuds against the bestial human face from which he would escape.) Swift's lack of interest in being a literary man as such may account, then, for some of his strongest qualities. The conception of literature as an instrument or a diversion or even a vanity may exist along with the power to produce the greatest literature: Pascal's conviction of the vanity of eloquence is one reason why he is a greater prose writer than Valéry, the aesthete, who mocks at this conviction. Here it seems almost as if from examining Swift's writings themselves we might arrive at Freud's perception: that the writer is more than commonly obsessed by a desire for power which he seeks to gratify through his public fantasies.

Because of an introverted disposition, he is unable to gratify this desire in the usual arenas of external action. Introversion is the brand of his calling: he is the divided man, his consciousness always present but a little absent, hovering over itself, ready to pounce and bring back some fragment to his notebooks. The introverted disposition suggests some excessive and compelling need to be loved; and we would suspect that here too it must result primarily from some special strength or strain in the Oedipal relation. But whatever our speculation as to its source, the point of power remains clear; and if he seeks it by a detour, the writer's claims are nonetheless total: it is power of the most subtle kind that the writer wants, power over the mind and freedom of other human beings, his readers.

Such extraordinary claims of power, and particularly their indirectness of gratification, suggest immediately an ambivalent connection with that more than usually acute sense of guilt with which

writers as a class seem to be endowed. (That Swift suffered from extraordinary obsessions of guilt toward the end of his life, we know by accounts of several sources; but most of his life, since he accepted Christianity without question, these guilt feelings were tapped and drained off into religion; hence it is that in his writing we usually encounter the aggressive and outgoing parts of his personality.) Georges Blin, in "The Gash" (*Partisan Review*, Spring 1946), has presented very eloquently some of the sadistic motives that operate in the artist. We should expect—in accordance with the usual ambivalence—a masochistic pattern to be equally operative, and perhaps even more to the fore because of the essential indirectness of the artist's drives toward power and sadism. What else explains the writer's extraordinary eagerness for the painful humility of his yoke as he crouches over his desk stubbornly weaving and reweaving his own being hundreds of times? "Thought, study, sacrifice, and mortification"—how he trembles with joy to put on these hair shirts of his solitude and calling! These punishments he inflicts upon himself over his desk will help to make clear then why writing should satisfy the claims of guilt upon him; why he should search so passionately for redemption upon the written page, and why as the paragraph takes shape beneath his pen he can feel for moments that his step has become a little less heavy on the face of the earth. But we should also know this ambivalence of power and guilt from phenomenological scrutiny. We never live in a purely private world, our consciousness is penetrated at every point by the consciousness of others, and what is it but one step from seeking redemption in one's own eyes to seeking it in the eyes of others? The movement by which we stoop to lift ourselves out of the pit of self-contempt is one and unbroken with that thrust which would carry us above the shoulders of our fellowmen.

And is not this ambivalent urge to power-guilt but the sign of that excessive need to be loved which has driven the writer into a profession where he must speak with *his own* voice, offer to the public gaze of the world so much of his own existence? Love to be conquered by force, or taken as a gift of tenderness and pity for his confession.

But both the satisfaction (of power) and relief (from guilt), though they glow brightly, glow, alas, only for moments, and we live again in the shadow of ourselves. Nothing in the world (we are told) is a substitute for anything else, and if there is a point beyond which the writer can never satisfy these urges in literature itself, then this inability can no longer be regarded as peculiar to Swift, a deficiency of his "case," but an essential and mortifying aspect of the literary condition everywhere. So we come back to our point: Swift is certainly not a modern literary man, but we only had to go deep enough, and we have arrived at a world of impulses and motives that we recognize as our own.

THE MODERNS—AYTRÉ'S JOURNEY

Despite the ancient recognition, the modern world of the crack-up and breakdown has really become a new and almost discontinuous phenomenon. (First the continuity; now we must do justice to the other aspect, the discontinuity of the modern.) It is time we had an exhaustive and statistical study of the problem, done with the grubbing thoroughness of a Ph.D. thesis; for the present I would only suggest some of the main statistical categories: the madmen, those who broke, Swift, Cowper, William Collins, Christopher Smart, Hoelderlin, Ruskin; figures who were not altogether normal, if not altogether mad, like Blake; who, like Coleridge and DeQuincey, had to salvage themselves through drugs (the Romantic equivalent of the American Pattern); or who produce their writing out of a maximum anxiety, their personal rack of torture, like Baudelaire and Eliot; and from these on we could ramify off into all the various subtler neuroses that have afflicted literary men. Even from this sketchy suggestion of a list it begins to appear that the incidence of aberration, neurosis, or outright madness is such that one really begins to doubt whether these misfortunes are accidental to the profession of letters as such.¹ And at this point perhaps we ought to face openly the question whether there is not some original flaw—original sin, if you will—about the profession such that the writer's struggle to live it out com-

pletely must inevitably involve him in some kind of hubris; and whether, after all, the game is really worth the candle. Freud at one earlier point did suggest something like this: that art is a survival in our day of primitive magic, with some of the magical still hanging about its aspirations; which did not at all prevent him, we may notice, from deriving very deep pleasure and insight from great works of literature.

The fault, the accumulating difficulty, seem to come from the very advance itself of Western culture and history. In a story by Jean Paulhan, "*Aytré qui perd l'habitude*" (Aytré Loses the Knack), the hero keeps a journal while leading a trek across Madagascar. En route across the country the entries in the journal are very simple and direct: we arrive, leave, chickens cost seven sous, we lay in a provision of medicines, etc. But with the arrival in the city of Ambositra the journal suddenly becomes complicated: discussions of ideas, women's headdresses, strange scenes and characters in the street. The most ordinary incidents of daily life become complicated and almost unexpressible to Aytré struggling to keep his journal. Paulhan is after other game in this tale, where we need not follow him; enough for us that we can take this journey of Aytré for a symbol of the march of writers in history as they progress toward subjects ever more complex, driven by the compulsion to "make it new." From this point of view Paulhan's title itself becomes something of a misnomer: Aytré's trouble is not that he has lost the knack—quite the contrary, he now has altogether too much of it. Become infinitely complicated, all-absorbing, possessive, now the knack *has him*. Aytré, in short, has become a modern writer. He had begun as the simple scribe of the clan.

"Make it new," Pound cried, and Eliot further explicated: Modern poetry must be complicated because modern life is complicated. Both have passed into famous slogans in defense of modernism; but both abbreviate what is a much more complicated process, and have to be expanded in the light or darkness of Aytré's painful journey. The writer objectifies his fantasies (that much of Freudian formula we have to use in any case) but he must return to view them with the analytic eyes of daylight and criticism. But this real-

ity to which he submits is not what he meets if he gazes out into the world with the naked eyes of the first-born man; the reality principle for the writer is one qualified by the works, the recorded experience and knowledge of man, already in existence. After Proust no one can write about love with the old charming simplicity of Prévost. It would be pastiche: archaic and unauthentic. In Prévost it charms us, it is real and convincing. At his cultural moment, love—as the simple lovely disease of sensibility—was itself an extraordinary *donnée*, and the writer could find such release in it that he was capable of the necessary identification with his fantasy. (Even when a form like the novel swings back momentarily into a simpler pattern, the new simplicity is quite different from the old; the simplicity of Gide is not the old simplicity of the classical French novel, but a new one—self-conscious, difficult, refined, defining its slender line from the sum of its rejections.) Hence it appears that Pound's manifesto, and Eliot's recommendation of a complication to parallel the complication of modern life, formulate effect rather than cause; we ought instead to put it that the writer, existing in his time, in his place, and with his past must make such discoveries as to secure the completeness of release necessary to achieve authenticity. If he repeats what is already discovered, he has no chance of making it *his*. That is why his existence is relentlessly historical and he has to travel Aytré's journey. Now the reality principle functions in life chiefly (or its function is felt more forcibly there) to inhibit the gratification of desire. Its literary analogue functions in the same way: it checks the writer from releasing himself into the fantasies that are unreal, trivial, or superficial. To find his authenticity, a material into which he is completely released, the writer has now to dig ever deeper, the unconscious that is released must be at deeper and deeper levels. So he finds, like Aytré, the literary "knack" become absorbing and terrifying. Hence the burden of neurosis that weighs more and more heavily upon the modern man of letters.

INCREASING BURDENS

The more gifted the writer the more likely he is to be critically conscious of his literary tradition—the more conscious, that is, of the reality principle as it operates in the literary sphere—and the harder it becomes for him to fall into one of the easy publicist styles of his day. Recently I read about a young writer who had written a best-seller in four weeks and made \$400,000 out of it—\$100,000 a week, almost as good pay as a movie star. If books could be written from the top of one's mind merely (even books of this kind), it is naïve to think a major writer would not do it: after four weeks of absence he returns to support himself for many years in the prosecution of his own unremunerative and serious tasks. But it seems impossible to write a best-seller in complete parody, one has to believe in one's material even there, and it is impossible to fake unless one is a fake. Joyce has written in *Ulysses* a superb parody of the sentimental romance for schoolgirls, but it is quite obvious from that chapter that Joyce could not have turned out a novel in this genre for money: his irony and self-consciousness would have got in the way, and the book would not have attracted its readers but in the end only Joyce's readers. The writer writes what he can, and if he decides to sell out it is by corrupting and cheapening his own level, or perhaps slipping down a step below it; but writing is not so uncommitted an intellectual effort that he can drop down facilely to a very much lower level and operate with enough skill there to convince that kind of reader. Joyce did not write *Finnegans Wake* out of a free decision taken in the void, but because his experience of life and Western culture was what it was, and he had to write that book if he was to write anything.

It is perhaps not a very pleasant thought, but it seems inescapable, that even the commonest best-seller is the product of the personal being of the author and demands its own kind of authenticity. Life also imprisons us in its rewards; and we may draw some satisfaction from the thought that these gay reapers of prestige and money, if they are to keep on terms with their audience, can have in the end only lives adequate to their books: *On écrit le*

livre qu'on merite. Our satisfaction might be greater if we were not on the other hand also painfully acquainted with the opposite phenomenon: the gifted people who find it difficult to produce precisely because they are too intelligent and sensitive to tailor their writing to the reigning market. The very awareness of standards inhibits them from writing, and, not being geniuses, they are unable to break through and produce anything adequate to those standards. The literary future in America, and perhaps the West generally, seems to be leading to this final and lamentable split: on the one hand, an enormous body of run-of-the-mill writing (machine-made, as it were), becoming ever more slick as it becomes more technically adequate through abundant competition and appropriation of the tricks of previous serious writing, and in the end generating its own types of pseudo authenticity, like Steinbeck or Marquand; on the other hand, an occasional genius breaking through this wall here and there, at ever more costly price in personal conflict, anguish, and difficulty. Modern poetry already provides us its own and extreme version of this exacerbating split; think of the extremity of personal difficulty required to produce the authentic poetry of our time: the depth of anguish which secreted the few poems of Eliot; and Yeats, we remember, had to struggle through a long life of political unrest, personal heartbreak, see the friends and poets of his youth die off or kill themselves, before he came into his own and could produce poems capable of convincing us that this poetry was not merely a kind of "solemn game."

Some of the more internal difficulties that beset the pursuit of literature are being very much discussed in France by writers like Maurice Blanchot and Brice Parain. Blanchot finishes one essay, in which he has explored certain aspects of anxiety, silence, and expression, with the devastating remark, "It is enough that literature should continue to seem possible," though the reader by the time he has waded through Blanchot's rarefactions to that point may very well have lost the conviction that even the possibility remained. These French researches are of a quite special character, continuing the tradition of Mallarmé—or, rather, attempting to see the aesthetic problems of Mallarmé from the human anguish of

Pascal. (As the burdens of civilization become heavier and we see existence itself with fewer illusions, we have come perhaps to share Pascal's attitude toward poetry: a vanity, a "solemn game"; at any rate, we seem to demand more of the modern writer before we take him very seriously.) These difficulties are extreme and we need not share them in that form: after the rigors to which Mallarmé submitted poetry in his search for a "*langage authentique*," no wonder silence should appear as the only and haunting possibility of speech. After Mallarmé, poetry had to swing back toward the language of what he calls "*universel reportage*," and Eliot's poetry has shown us that this language, suitably charged and concentrated, can be the vehicle of very great poetry. Blanchot's difficulties persist but in another form (especially in a commercial culture). Not silence but garrulousness ("unauthentic chatter," as Heidegger would say) may be the threat confronting the writer; but always and everywhere the difficulty of securing authenticity.

The difficulties we face in America—a society which turns, as Van Wyck Brooks says, its most gifted men into crackpots—are obviously of a much more external and violent kind than in France. External pressures abet the internal tensions, which become unendurable, and at long last comes that slide over into the more tranquil and private self-indulgence of fantasy with a consequent weakening of the reality principle. One (a critic) develops a private language; another spins out elaborate literary theories without content or relevance; a third has maintained his literary alertness and eye for relevance through a sheer aggressiveness which has cost him his ability to maintain personal relations—and which appears therefore in his work as a mutilation too. Scott Fitzgerald's confidante in "The Crack-up" (perhaps his most mature piece of writing, at that) gives him the extraordinary advice: "*Listen. Suppose this wasn't a crack in you—suppose it was in the Grand Canyon. . . . By God, if I ever cracked, I'd try to make the whole world crack with me.*" And she was right and profound, but Fitzgerald was tied by too many strings to the values of American life to see her truth. His crack-up was the dawning of a truth upon him which he could not completely grasp or recognize intellectually. Swift in that position would have seen that the crack is in

the Grand Canyon, in the whole world, in the total human face about him. If he is powerful enough—now against greater odds—to make the world crack in his work, the writer has at the least the gratification of revenge, and the ego that deeper conquest (described above) where its anguish now seems no more than an appropriate response to a world portrayed (and with some fidelity) as cracked. But, alas, these energies which seek reality and are capable of transforming the neurotic mass into the writer's special and unique vision of the world can also be blocked by the external difficulties in the literary situation. And when that happens we open the door, as Freud says, to the psychoses—at any rate, to the breakdown and crack-up.

*ABI VIATOR ET IMITARE SI POTERIS*²

And so I am brought back into the center of my theme. If I appeared to have abandoned the theme of neurosis for the difficulties, external and internal, that confront the modern writer, it was only because these difficulties as part of his alienation are the aggravating causes and public face of his madness.

But why (in the end) should it be the writer's fate—more than of any other intellectual profession—to confront this crack in the face of the world? Because his subject is the very world of experience as such, and it is this world, this total world, which he must somehow salvage. The scientist has his appointed place in the community of researchers, he confronts carefully delimited fragments of experience, the data from which he proceeds are publicly recognizable, and his whole being is to be, as it were, an incarnate outward public mind. But the writer is alone—potentially twenty-four hours a day, the luminal pill and the writing pad beside his bed for whatever welcome or unwelcome presence comes that night. On the other hand, it might seem that the philosopher, since he confronts in his own way the totality of experience, might also show some fatal tendency toward aberration. But the philosopher deals with concepts and out of these he may construct some kind of "meaning" for the world: when speculative systems were still believed, he

had only to be agile enough to design one of these towering arks of salvation, and what if it leaked a little, he was a professor and he had something to do the rest of his professorial life plugging its gaps; now when the pretense to speculative theories is no longer even taken seriously the philosopher can construct an equally elaborate theory showing that the question itself has no meaning, and so philosophy continues to be possible. Whatever the impasse of insoluble antinomies at which his thought finally arrives, he can continue to arrange these in neat parallel columns, chip away at their edges and perpetually recast their statement as if preparing bit by bit for a solution which in fact never arrives; and so continues in business, he has something to say, he "gets published"; and after the initial shocks and disturbance mankind has shown itself capable of settling down peacefully into positivism, and few people are more intellectually adjusted than the positivists. But it is not at the level of concepts that the appalling face of the world is seen, and it is another kind of "meaning" that the writer must construct. Out of the ravages of his experience, his desperate loneliness, he must put forth those works which look back into his gaze with conviction and authenticity and wear about them the gleams of interest—cathectic charges, in the technical term—which have fled from the vast bare blank face of the world as seen in the extreme situations of *his* truth: in sleeplessness, the nervous darkness, against death and against the inexorable and dragging vista of time which is his being.

¹ The reader should compare, for a somewhat different view of the matter, Mr. Lionel Trilling's "Art and Neurosis," *Partisan Review* (Winter 1945). By indicating my disagreements with Mr. Trilling's admirable essay, perhaps I may sum up, in more scientific terms, the psychoanalytic view which lies at the base (perhaps a little hidden) of my own discussion.

Mr. Trilling's main point, perhaps, is that neurosis by itself will not make anyone a great writer; a proposition with which I am in complete agreement.

I would also agree with him that there are many neurotics among businessmen and scientists (though I doubt the scientists could match the incidence among literary men). But granting such widespread latent neuroticism (the wives of businessmen could tell us a lot, if they chose), the point would be that with the writer it is not latent but consciously exploited. My difference with Mr. Trilling is that I do not consider the question as primarily

statistical: whether a certain group known as scientists contains as many neurotics as another group called writers. My main point, rather, is one about the *literary process* itself: that this process does, in a certain way, imitate the neurotic process and does exploit neurotic material.

Here it is pertinent to indicate my principal disagreement with Freud, who analyzes the effect of a literary work in terms of the pleasure obtained from fantasies and daydreams. This may do justice to our childish delight in romances—or to the level at which we read *Gulliver's Travels* in childhood. But it hardly does justice to the power which the fiction of Kafka, Joyce, or Proust has over us in our adult years. I hold instead that it is the writer's *identification* with his fantasy, rather than the aspect of fantasy itself, which has power over us, convinces us. (The phenomenon of identification, by the way, is very sparingly discussed by Freud, probably because the psychic transaction involved in it is still quite obscure.) And in this identification with fantasy the writer imitates, *up to a certain point*, one of the deepest and commonest phenomena of pathology.

Since Freud speaks of the cathexis (i.e., charge of psychic energy) which the child has toward the objects of play, he should have seen that the cathexis of the writer toward the objects of fantasy is more significant than the aspect of fantasy itself. We cited Kafka as a crucial case; equally crucial would be the case of Joyce, who rarely moves us through the elaborateness, surprise, or ingenuity of his fantasies, but by *the powerful charge he is able to lay on the most banal episode*.

The second element in my analytic view is, admittedly, more speculative, and concerns the *psychic type* which now seems to emerge with the modern writer. If we demand of the writer a deeper authenticity—identification with fantasy—then I think we must expect that more and more only a certain psychic type will be at once capable of this, and also driven to embrace it as his own painful profession. We have suggested (speculatively) that the individual who is driven to exhibit such large slices of his psyche to the world is compelled by an excessive need for the winning of love. Whether or not this hypothesis be verified by literary and biographical evidence, it should not surprise us, at any rate, that the modern writer (capable of satisfying our severe demands) has become, by and large, a neurotic type.

The third element of my view, however, attempts to separate the neurosis of the writer from that of other men. The writer's neurosis, through displacement and appropriation, attempts to square itself with reality—but only in the work.

Here I reach some agreement with Mr. Trilling—but not completely or fundamentally. When he speaks of the writer's ability to "shape" the neurotic material, he seems to suggest that this latter may be some kind of clay external to the writer, and that there is some portion of the mind which remains completely outside the neurosis. This notion of control seems also to imply that the writer attains, through the work, health and wholeness in his life too.

This strikes me as quite unguarded from an analytic point of view. The great counterexample that comes immediately to mind is one from painting: the case of Van Gogh (recently discussed by Mr. Meyer Schapiro), who, a few days after painting "Crows in the Wheatfield" and writing to his brother

that the country was "healthful and strengthening," committed suicide! The triumph of the ego, in short, is in the work and not the life. It is, as I have said, an "as if" triumph. Swift did not heal himself by writing *Gulliver's Travels*.

The source of the catharsis, by the way, that Van Gogh obtained from that particular painting has to be analyzed in terms of this essay: the momentary triumph of the ego is that it has now appropriated elements from reality corresponding to its own torments, and depicted a scene to which these torments seem an adequate response, and so has the illusion that its own reality principle has been restored and safeguarded.

² From Swift's epitaph: "Go, traveler, and imitate him if you can."

KENNETH BURKE

Freud—and the Analysis of Poetry

THE READING OF Freud I find suggestive almost to the point of bewilderment. Accordingly, what I should like most to do would be simply to take representative excerpts from his work, copy them out, and write glosses upon them. Very often these glosses would be straight extensions of his own thinking. At other times they would be attempts to characterize his strategy of presentation with reference to interpretative method in general. And, finally, the Freudian perspective was developed primarily to chart a psychiatric field rather than an aesthetic one; but since we are here considering the analogous features of these two fields rather than their important differences, they would be glosses attempting to suggest how far the literary critic should go along with Freud and what extra-Freudian material he would have to add. Such a desire to write an article on Freud in the margins of his books, must for practical reasons here remain a frustrated desire. An article such as this must condense by generalization, which requires me to slight the most stimulating factor of all—the detailed articulation in which he embodies his extraordinary frankness.

Freud's frankness is no less remarkable by reason of the fact that

he had perfected a method for being frank. He could say humble, even humiliating, things about himself and us because he had changed the rules somewhat and could make capital of observations that others, with vested interests of a different sort, would feel called upon to suppress by dictatorial decree. Or we might say that what for him could fall within the benign category of observation could for them fall only within its malign counterpart, spying.

Yet though honesty is, in Freud, methodologically made easier, it is by no means honesty made easy. And Freud's own accounts of his own dreams show how poignantly he felt at times the "disgrace" of his occupation. There are doubtless many thinkers whose strange device might be *ecclesia super cloacam*. What more fitting place to erect one's church than above a sewer! One might even say that sewers are what churches are for. But usually this is done by laying all the stress upon the *ecclesia* and its beauty. So that, even when the man's work fails to be completed for him as a social act, by the approval of his group, he has the conviction of its intrinsic beauty to give him courage and solace.

But to think of Freud, during the formative years of his doctrines, confronting something like repugnance among his colleagues, and even, as his dreams show, in his own eyes, is to think of such heroism as Unamuno found in Don Quixote; and if Don Quixote risked the social judgment of ridicule, he still had the consolatory thought that his imaginings were beautiful, stressing the *ecclesia* aspect, whereas Freud's theories bound him to a more drastic self-ostracizing act—the charting of the relations between *ecclesia* and *cloaca* that forced him to analyze the *cloaca* itself. Hence, his work was with the confessional as cathartic, as purgative; this haruspicy required an inspection of the entrails; it was, bluntly, an interpretative sculpting of excrement, with beauty replaced by a science of the grotesque.

Confronting this, Freud does nonetheless advance to erect a structure which, if it lacks beauty, has astounding ingeniousness and fancy. It is full of paradoxes, of leaps across gaps, of vistas—much more so than the work of many a modern poet who sought for nothing else but these and had no search for accuracy to motivate his work. These qualities alone would make it unlikely that

readers literarily inclined could fail to be attracted, even while repelled. Nor can one miss in it the profound charitableness that is missing in so many modern writers who, likewise concerned with the cloaca, become efficiently concerned with nothing else, and make of their work pure indictment, pure oath, pure striking-down, pure spitting-upon, pure kill. True, this man, who taught us so much about father-rejection and who ironically became himself so frequently the rejected father in the works of his schismatic disciples, does finally descend to quarrelsomeness, despite himself, when recounting the history of the psychoanalytic movement. But, over the great course of his work, it is the matter of human rescue that he is concerned with—not the matter of vengeance. On a few occasions, let us say, he is surprised into vengefulness. But the very essence of his studies, even at their most forbidding moments (in fact, precisely at those moments), is its charitableness, its concern with salvation. To borrow an excellent meaningful pun from Triggant Burrow, this salvation is approached not in terms of religious hospitality but rather in terms of secular hospitalization. Yet it is the spirit of Freud; it is what Freud's courage is for.

Perhaps, therefore, the most fitting thing for a writer to do, particularly in view of the fact that Freud is now among the highly honored class—the exiles from Nazi Germany (how accurate those fellows are! how they seem, with almost 100 per cent efficiency, to have weeded out their greatest citizens!)—perhaps the most fitting thing to do would be simply to attempt an article of the “homage to Freud” sort and call it a day.

However, my job here cannot be confined to that. I have been commissioned to consider the bearing of Freud's theories upon literary criticism. And these theories were not designed primarily for literary criticism at all but were rather a perspective that, developed for the charting of a nonaesthetic field, was able (by reason of its scope) to migrate into the aesthetic field. The margin of overlap was this: The acts of the neurotic are symbolic acts. Hence in so far as both the neurotic act and the poetic act share this property in common, they may share a terminological chart in common. But in so far as they deviate, terminology likewise must deviate. And

this deviation is a fact that literary criticism must explicitly consider.

As for the glosses on the interpretative strategy in general, they would be of this sort: For one thing, they would concern a distinction between what I should call an essentializing mode of interpretation and a mode that stresses proportion of ingredients. The tendency in Freud is toward the first of these. That is, if one found a complex of, let us say, seven ingredients in a man's motivation, the Freudian tendency would be to take one of these as the essence of the motivation and to consider the other six as sublimated variants. We could imagine, for instance, manifestations of sexual impotence accompanying a conflict in one's relations with his familiars and one's relations at the office. The proportional strategy would involve the study of these three as a cluster. The motivation would be synonymous with the interrelationships among them. But the essentializing strategy would, in Freud's case, place the emphasis upon the sexual manifestation, as causal ancestor of the other two.

This essentializing strategy is linked with a normal ideal of science: to "explain the complex in terms of the simple." This ideal almost vows one to select one or another motive from a cluster and interpret the others in terms of it. The naïve proponent of economic determinism, for instance, would select the quarrel at the office as the essential motive, and would treat the quarrel with familiars and the sexual impotence as mere results of this. Now, I don't see how you can possibly explain the complex in terms of the simple without having your very success used as a charge against you. When you get through, all that your opponent need say is: "But you have explained the complex in terms of the simple—and the simple is precisely what the complex is not."

Perhaps the faith philosophers, as against the reason philosophers, did not have to encounter a paradox at this point. Not that they avoided paradoxes, for I think they must always cheat when trying to explain how evil can exist in a world created by an all-powerful and wholly good Creator. But at least they did not have to confront the complexity-simplicity difficulty, since their

theological reductions referred to a ground in God, who was simultaneously the ultimately complex and the ultimately simple. Naturalistic strategies lack this convenient "out"—hence their explanations are simplifications, and every simplification is an oversimplification.¹

It is possible that the literary critic, taking communication as his basic category, may avoid this particular paradox (communication thereby being a kind of attenuated God term). You can reduce everything to communication—yet communication is extremely complex. But, in any case, communication is by no means the basic category of Freud. The sexual wish, or libido, is the basic category; and the complex forms of communication that we see in a highly alembicated philosophy would be mere sublimations of this.

A writer deprived of Freud's clinical experience would be a fool to question the value of his category as a way of analyzing the motives of the class of neurotics Freud encountered. There is a pronouncedly individualistic element in any technique of salvation (my toothache being alas! my private property), and even those beset by a pandemic of sin or microbes will enter heaven or get discharged from the hospital one by one; and the especially elaborate process of diagnosis involved in Freudian analysis even to this day makes it more available to those suffering from the ills of preoccupation and leisure than to those suffering from the ills of occupation and unemployment (with people generally tending to be only as mentally sick as they can afford to be). This state of affairs makes it all the more likely that the typical psychoanalytic patient would have primarily private sexual motivations behind his difficulties. (Did not Henry James say that sex is something about which we think a great deal when we are not thinking about anything else? ²) Furthermore, I believe that studies of artistic imagery, outside the strict pale of psychoanalytic emphasis, will bear out Freud's brilliant speculations as to the sexual puns, the *double-entendres*, lurking behind the most unlikely façades. If a man acquires a method of thinking about everything else, for instance, during the sexual deprivations and rigors of adolescence, this cure may well take on the qualities of the disease; and in so far as he

continues with this same method in adult years, though his life has since become sexually less exacting, such modes as incipient homosexuality or masturbation may very well be informatively interwoven in the strands of his thought and be discoverable by inspection of the underlying imagery or patterns in this thought.

Indeed, there are only a few fundamental bodily idioms—and why should it not be likely that an attitude, no matter how complex its ideational expression, could only be completed by a channelization within its corresponding gestures? That is, the details of experience behind A's dejection may be vastly different from the details of experience behind B's dejection, yet both A and B may fall into the same bodily posture in expressing their dejection. And in an era like ours, coming at the end of a long individualistic emphasis, where we frequently find expressed an attitude of complete independence, of total, uncompromising self-reliance, this expression would not reach its fulfillment in choreography except in the act of "practical narcissism" (that is, the only wholly independent person would be the one who practiced self-abuse and really meant it).

But it may be noticed that we have here tended to consider mind-body relations from an interactive point of view rather than a materialistic one (which would take the body as the essence of the act and the mentation as the sublimation).

Freud himself, interestingly enough, was originally nearer to this view (necessary, as I hope to show later, for specifically literary purposes) than he later became. Freud explicitly resisted the study of motivation by way of symbols. He distinguished his own mode of analysis from the symbolic by laying the stress upon free association. That is, he would begin the analysis of a neurosis without any preconceived notion as to the absolute meaning of any image that the patient might reveal in the account of a dream. His procedure involved the breaking-down of the dream into a set of fragments, with the analyst then inducing the patient to improvise associations on each of these fragments in turn. And afterward, by charting recurrent themes, he would arrive at the crux of the patient's conflict.

Others (particularly Stekel), however, proposed a great short

cut here. They offered an absolute content for various items of imagery. For instance, in Stekel's dictionary of symbols, which has the absoluteness of an old-fashioned dream book, the right-hand path equals the road to righteousness, the left-hand path equals the road to crime, in anybody's dreams (in Lenin's presumably, as well as the Pope's). Sisters are breasts and brothers are buttocks. "The luggage of a traveler is the burden of sin by which one is oppressed," etc. Freud criticizes these on the basis of his own clinical experiences—and whereas he had reservations against specific equations, and rightly treats the method as antithetical to his own contribution, he decides that a high percentage of Stekel's purely intuitive hunches were corroborated. And after warning that such a gift as Stekel's is often evidence of paranoia, he decides that normal persons may also occasionally be capable of it.

Its lure as efficiency is understandable. And, indeed, if we revert to the matter of luggage, for instance, does it not immediately give us insight into a remark of André Gide, who is a specialist in the portrayal of scrupulous criminals, who has developed a stylistic trick for calling to seduction in the accents of evangelism, and who advises that one should learn to "travel light"?

But the trouble with short cuts is that they deny us a chance to take longer routes. With them, the essentializing strategy takes a momentous step forward. You have next but to essentialize your short cuts in turn (a short cut atop a short cut), and you get the sexual emphasis of Freud, the all-embracing ego compensation of Adler, or Rank's master-emphasis upon the birth-trauma, etc.

Freud himself fluctuates in his search for essence. At some places you find him proclaiming the all-importance of the sexual, at other places you find him indignantly denying that his psychology is a pansexual one at all, and at still other places you get something halfway between the two, via the concept of the libido, which embraces a spectrum from phallus to philanthropy.

The important matter for our purposes is to suggest that the examination of a poetic work's internal organization would bring us nearer to a variant of the typically Freudian free-association method than to the purely symbolic method toward which he subsequently gravitated.³

The critic should adopt a variant of the free-association method. One obviously cannot invite an author, especially a dead author, to oblige him by telling what the author thinks of when the critic isolates some detail or other for improvisation. But what he can do is to note the context of imagery and ideas in which an image takes its place. He can also note, by such analysis, the kinds of evaluations surrounding this image of a crossing; for instance, is it an escape from or a return to an evil or a good, etc.? Until finally, by noting the ways in which this crossing behaves, what subsidiary imagery accompanies it, what kind of event it grows out of, what kind of event grows out of it, what altered rhythmic and tonal effects characterize it, etc., one grasps its significance as motivation. And there is no essential motive offered here. The motive of the work is equated with the structure of interrelationships within the work itself.

“But there is more to a work of art than that.” I hear this objection being raised. And I agree with it. And I wonder whether we could properly consider the matter in this wise:

For convenience, using the word “poem” to cover any complete, made artistic product, let us divide this artefact (the invention, creation, formation, poetic construct) in accordance with three modes of analysis: dream, prayer, chart.

The psychoanalysis of Freud and of the schools stemming from Freud has brought forward an astoundingly fertile range of observations that give us insight into the poem as dream. There is opened up before us a sometimes almost terrifying glimpse into the ways in which we may, while overtly doing one thing, be covertly doing another. Yet, there is nothing mystical or even unusual about this. I may, for instance, consciously place my elbow upon the table. Yet at the same time I am clearly unconscious of the exact distance between my elbow and my nose. Or, if that analogy seems like cheating, let us try another: I may be unconscious of the way in which a painter friend, observant of my postures, would find the particular position of my arm characteristic of me.

Or let us similarly try to take the terror out of infantile regression. In so far as I speak the same language that I learned as

a child, every time I speak there is, within my speech, an ingredient of regression to the infantile level. Regression, we might say, is a function of progression. Where the progression has been a development by evolution or continuity of growth (as were one to have learned to speak and think in English as a child, and still spoke and thought in English) rather than by revolution or discontinuity of growth (as were one to have learned German in childhood, to have moved elsewhere at an early age, and since become so at home in English that he could not even understand a mature conversation in the language of his childhood), the archaic and the now would be identical. You could say, indifferently, either that the speech is regression or that it is not regression. But were the man, who had forgot the language of his childhood, to begin speaking nothing but this early language (under a sudden agitation or as the result of some steady pressure), we should have the kind of regression that goes formally by this name in psychoanalytic nomenclature.

The ideal growth, I suppose—the growth without elements of alienation, discontinuity, homelessness—is that wherein regression is natural. We might sloganize it as “the adult a child matured.” Growth has here been simply a successive adding of cells—the growth of the chambered nautilus. But there is also the growth of the adult who, “when he became a man, put away childish things.” This is the growth of the crab, that grows by abandoning one room and taking on another. It produces moments of crisis. It makes for philosophies of emancipation and enlightenment, where one gets a jolt and is “awakened from the sleep of dogma” (and alas! in leaving his profound “Asiatic slumber,” he risks getting in exchange more than mere wakefulness, more than the eternal vigilance that is the price of liberty—he may get wakefulness plus, i.e., insomnia).

There are, in short, critical points (or, in the Hegel-Marx vocabulary, changes of quantity leading to changes of quality) where the process of growth or change converts a previous circle of protection into a circle of confinement. The first such revolution may well be, for the human individual, a purely biological one—the change at birth when the fetus, heretofore enjoying a larval exist-

ence in the womb, being fed on manna from the placenta, so outgrows this circle of protection that the benign protection becomes a malign circle of confinement, whereat it must burst forth into a different kind of world—a world of locomotion, aggression, competition, hunt. The mother, it is true, may have already been living in such a world; but the fetus was in a world within this world—in a monastery—a world such as is lived in by “coupon clippers,” who get their dividends as the result of sharp economic combat but who may, so long as the payments are regular, devote themselves to thoughts and diseases far “above” these harsh material operations.

In the private life of the individual there may be many subsequent jolts of a less purely biological nature, as with the death of some one person who had become pivotal to this individual’s mental economy. But whatever these unique variants may be, there is again a universal variant at adolescence, when radical changes in the glandular structure of the body make this body a correspondingly altered environment for the mind, requiring a corresponding change in our perspective, our structure of interpretations, meanings, values, purposes, and inhibitions, if we are to take it properly into account.

In the informative period of childhood our experiences are strongly personalized. Our attitudes take shape with respect to distinct people who have roles, even animals and objects being vessels of character. Increasingly, however, we begin to glimpse a world of abstract relationships, of functions understood solely through the medium of symbols in books. Even such real things as Tibet and Eskimos and Napoleon are for us, who have not been to Tibet, or lived with Eskimos, or fought under Napoleon, but a structure of signs. In a sense, it could be said that we learn these signs flat. We must start from scratch. There is no tradition in them; they are pure present. For though they have been handed down by tradition, we can read meaning into them only in so far as we can project or extend them out of our own experience. We may, through being burned a little, understand the signs for being burned a lot—it is in this sense that the coaching of interpretation could be called traditional. But we cannot understand the signs for being burned

a lot until we have in our own flat experience, here and now, been burned a little.

Out of what can these extensions possibly be drawn? Only out of the informative years of childhood. Psychoanalysis talks of purposive forgetting. Yet purposive forgetting is the only way of remembering. One learns the meaning of "table," "book," "father," "mother," "mustn't," by forgetting the contexts in which these words were used. The Darwinian ancestry (locating the individual in his feudal line of descent from the ape) is matched in Freud by a still more striking causal ancestry that we might sloganize as "the child is father to the man."⁴

As we grow up new meanings must either be engrafted upon old meanings (being to that extent *double-entendres*) or they must be new starts (hence, involving problems of dissociation).

It is in the study of the poem as dream that we find revealed the ways in which the poetic organization takes shape under these necessities. Revise Freud's terms, if you will. But nothing is done by simply trying to refute them or to tie them into knots. One may complain at this procedure, for instance: Freud characterizes the dream as the fulfillment of a wish; an opponent shows him a dream of frustration, and he answers: "But the dreamer wishes to be frustrated." You may demur at that, pointing out that Freud has developed a "heads I win, tails you lose" mode of discourse here. But I maintain that, in doing so, you have contributed nothing. For there are people whose values are askew, for whom frustration itself is a kind of grotesque ambition. If you would, accordingly, propose to chart this field by offering better terms, by all means do so. But better terms are the only kind of refutation here that is worth the trouble. Similarly, one may be unhappy with the concept of ambivalence, which allows pretty much of an open season on explanations (though the specific filling-out may provide a better case for the explanation than appears in this key term itself). But, again, nothing but an alternative explanation is worth the effort of discussion here. Freud's terminology is a dictionary, a lexicon for charting a vastly complex and hitherto largely uncharted field. You can't refute a dictionary. The only profitable answer to a dictionary is another one.

A profitable answer to Freud's treatment of the Oedipus complex, for instance, was Malinowski's study of its variants in a matriarchal society.⁵ Here we get at once a corroboration and a refutation of the Freudian doctrine. It is corroborated in that the same general patterns of enmity are revealed; it is refuted in that these patterns are shown not to be innate but to take shape with relation to the difference in family structure itself, with corresponding differences in roles.

Freud's overemphasis upon the patriarchal pattern (an assumption of its absoluteness that is responsible for the Freudian tendency to underrate greatly the economic factors influencing the relationships of persons or roles) is a prejudicial factor that must be discounted, in Freud, even when treating the poem as dream. Though totemistic religion, for instance, flourished with matriarchal patterns, Freud treats even this in patriarchal terms. And I submit that this emphasis will conceal from us, to a large degree, what is going on in art (still confining ourselves to the dream level—the level at which Freudian co-ordinates come closest to the charting of the logic of poetic structure).

In the literature of transitional eras, for instance, we find an especial profusion of rebirth rituals, where the poet is making the symbolic passes that will endow him with a new identity. Now, imagine him trying to do a very thorough job of this reidentification. To be completely reborn, he would have to change his very lineage itself. He would have to revise not only his present but also his past. (Ancestry and cause are forever becoming intermingled—the thing is that from which it came—cause is *Ur-sache*, etc.) And could a personalized past be properly confined to a descent through the father, when it is the *mater* that is *semper certa*? Totemism, when not interpreted with Freud's patriarchal bias, may possibly provide us with the necessary cue here. Totemism, as Freud himself reminds us, was a magical device whereby the members of a group were identified with one another by the sharing of the same substance (a process often completed by the ritualistic eating of this substance, though it might, for this very reason, be prohibited on less festive occasions). And it is to the mother that the basic informative experiences of eating are related.

So, all told, even in strongly patriarchal societies (and much more so in a society like ours, where theories of sexual equality, with a corresponding confusion in sexual differentiation along occupational lines, have radically broken the symmetry of pure patriarchalism), would there not be a tendency for rebirth rituals to be completed by symbolizations of matricide and without derivation from competitive, monopolistic ingredients at all? ⁶

To consider explicitly a bit of political dreaming, is not Hitler's doctrine of Aryanism something analogous to the adoption of a new totemic line? Has he not voted himself a new identity and, in keeping with a bastardized variant of the strategy of materialistic science, rounded this out by laying claim to a distinct blood stream? What the Pope is saying, benignly, in proclaiming the Hebrew prophets as the spiritual ancestors of Catholicism, Hitler is saying malignly in proclaiming for himself a lineage totally distinct.

Freud, working within the patriarchal perspective, has explained how such thinking becomes tied up with persecution. The paranoid, he says, assigns his imagined persecutor the role of rejected father. This persecutor is all-powerful, as the father seems to the child. He is responsible for every imagined machination (as the Jews, in Hitler's scheme, become the universal devil-function, the leading brains behind every "plot"). Advancing from this brilliant insight, it is not hard to understand why, once Hitler's fantasies are implemented by the vast resources of a nation, the "persecutor" becomes the persecuted.

The point I am trying to bring out is that this assigning of a new lineage to one's self (as would be necessary, in assigning one's self a new identity) could not be complete were it confined to symbolic patricide. There must also be ingredients of symbolic matricide intermingled here (with the phenomena of totemism giving cause to believe that the ritualistic slaying of the maternal relationship may draw upon an even deeper level than the ritualistic slaying of the paternal relationship). Lineage itself is charted after the metaphor of the family tree, which is, to be sure, patriarchalized in Western heraldry, though we get a different quality in the tree of life. MacLeish, in his period of aesthetic negativism, likens the sound of good verse to the ring of the ax in the tree, and if I may mention

an early story of my own, *In Quest of Olympus*, a rebirth fantasy, it begins by the felling of a tree, followed by the quick change from child to adult, or, within the conventions of the fiction, the change from tiny "Treep" to gigantic "Arjk"; and though, for a long time, under the influence of the Freudian patriarchal emphasis, I tended to consider such trees as fathers, I later felt compelled to make them ambiguously parents. The symbolic structure of Peter Blume's painting, "The Eternal City," almost forces me to assign the tree, in that instance, to a purely maternal category, since the rejected father is pictured in the repellent phalluslike figure of Mussolini, leaving only the feminine role for the luxuriant tree that, by my interpretation of the picture, rounds out the lineage (with the dishonored Christ and the beggarwoman as vessels of the past lineage, and the lewd Mussolini and the impersonal tree as vessels of the new lineage, which I should interpret on the nonpolitical level as saying that sexuality is welcomed, but as a problem, while home is relegated to the world of the impersonal, abstract, observed).

From another point of view we may consider the sacrifice of gods, or of kings, as stylistic modes for dignifying human concerns (a kind of neo-euhemerism). In his stimulating study of the ritual drama, *The Hero*, Lord Raglan overstates, it seems to me, the notion that these dramas appealed purely as spectacles. Would it not be more likely that the fate of the sacrificial king was also the fate of the audience, in stylized form, dignified, "writ large"? Thus, their engrossment in the drama would not be merely that of watching a parade, or the utilitarian belief that the ritual would insure rainfall, crops, fertility, a good year, etc.; but, also, the stages of the hero's journey would chart the stages of their journey (as an Elizabethan play about royalty was not merely an opportunity for the pit to get a glimpse of high life, a living newspaper on the doings of society, but a dignification or memorializing of their own concerns, translated into the idiom then currently accepted as the proper language of magnification).⁷

But though we may want to introduce minor revisions in the Freudian perspective here, I submit that we should take Freud's key terms, "condensation" and "displacement," as the overall cate-

gories for the analysis of the poem as dream. The terms are really two different approaches to the same phenomenon. Condensation, we might say, deals with the respects in which house in a dream may be more than house, or house plus. And displacement deals with the way in which house may be other than house, or house minus. (Perhaps we should say, more accurately, minus house.)

One can understand the resistance to both of these emphases. It leaves no opportunity for a house to be purely and simply a house—and whatever we may feel about it as regards dreams, it is a very disturbing state of affairs when transferred to the realm of art. We must acknowledge, however, that the house in a poem is, when judged purely and simply as a house, a very flimsy structure for protection against wind and rain. So there seems to be some justice in retaining the Freudian terms when trying to decide what is going on in poetry. As Freud fills them out, the justification becomes stronger. The ways in which grammatical rules are violated, for instance; the dream's ways of enacting conjunctions, of solving arguments by club offers of mutually contradictory assertions; the importance of both concomitances and discontinuities for interpretative purposes (the phenomena of either association or dissociation, as you prefer, revealed with greatest clarity in the lapsus linguae); the conversion of an expression into its corresponding act (as were one, at a time when "over the fence is out" was an expression in vogue, to apply this comment upon some act by following the dream of this act by a dreamed incident of a ball going over a fence); and, above all, the notion that the optative is in dreams, as often in poetry and essay, presented in the indicative (a Freudian observation fertile to the neopositivists' critique of language)—the pliancy and ingenuity of Freud's researches here make entrancing reading, and continually provide insights that can be carried over, *mutatis mutandis*, to the operations of poetry. Perhaps we might sloganize the point thus: In so far as art contains a surrealist ingredient (and all art contains some of this ingredient), psychoanalytic co-ordinates are required to explain the logic of its structure.

Perhaps we might take some of the pain from the notions of condensation and displacement (with the tendency of one event

to become the synecdochic representative of some other event in the same cluster) by imagining a hypothetical case of authorship. A novelist, let us say, is trying to build up for us a sense of secrecy. He is picturing a conspiracy, yet he was never himself quite this kind of conspirator. Might not this novelist draw upon whatever kinds of conspiracy he himself had experientially known (as for instance were he to draft for this purpose memories of his participation in some childhood *Bund*)? If this were so, an objective breakdown of the imagery with which he surrounded the conspiratorial events in his novel would reveal this contributory ingredient. You would not have to read your interpretation into it. It would be objectively, structurally, there, and could be pointed to by scissor work. For instance, the novelist might explicitly state that, when joining the conspiracy, the hero recalled some incident of his childhood. Or the adult conspirators would, at strategic points, be explicitly likened by the novelist to children, etc. A statement about the ingredients of the work's motivation would thus be identical with a statement about the work's structure—a statement as to what goes with what in the work itself. Thus, in Coleridge's *The Eolian Harp*, you do not have to interpret the poet's communion with the universe as an affront to his wife; the poet himself explicitly apologizes to her for it. Also, it is an objectively citable fact that imagery of noon goes with this apology. If, then, we look at other poems by Coleridge, noting the part played by the sun at noon in the punishments of the guilt-laden Ancient Mariner, along with the fact that the situation of the narrator's confession involves the detention of a wedding guest from the marriage feast, plus the fact that a preference for church as against marriage is explicitly stated at the end of the poem, we begin to see a motivational cluster emerging. It is obvious that such structural interrelationships cannot be wholly conscious, since they are generalizations about acts that can only be made inductively and statistically after the acts have been accumulated. (This applies as much to the acts of a single poem as to the acts of many poems. We may find a theme emerging in one work that attains fruition in that same work—the ambiguities of its implications where it first emerges attaining explication in the same integer. Or its full

character may not be developed until a later work. In its ambiguous emergent form it is a synecdochic representative of the form it later assumes when it comes to fruition in either the same work or in another one.)

However, though the synecdochic process (whereby something does service for the other members of its same cluster or as the foreshadowing of itself in a later development) cannot be wholly conscious, the dream is not all dream. We might say, in fact, that the Freudian analysis of art was handicapped by the aesthetic of the period—an aesthetic shared even by those who would have considered themselves greatly at odds with Freud and who were, in contrast with his delving into the unbeautiful, concerned with beauty only. This was the aesthetic that placed the emphasis wholly upon the function of self-expression. The artist had a number—some unique character or identity—and his art was the externalizing of this inwardness. The general Schopenhauerian trend contributed to this. Von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* has re-enforced the same pattern. This version of voluntaristic processes, as connected with current theories of emancipation, resulted in a picture of the dark, unconscious drive calling for the artist to "out with it." The necessary function of the Freudian secular confessional, as a preparatory step to redemption, gave further strength to the same picture. Add the "complex in terms of the simple" strategy (with its variants—higher in terms of lower, normal as a mere attenuation of the abnormal, civilized as the primitive sublimated); add the war of the generations (which was considered as a kind of absolute rather than as a by-product of other factors, as those who hated the idea of class war took in its stead either the war of the generations or the war of the sexes)—and you get a picture that almost automatically places the emphasis upon art as utterance, as the naming of one's number, as a blurting-out, as catharsis by secretion.

I suggested two other broad categories for the analysis of poetic organization: prayer and chart.

Prayer would enter the Freudian picture in so far as it concerns the optative. But prayer does not stop at that. Prayer is also an

act of communion. Hence, the concept of prayer, as extended to cover also secular forms of petition, moves us into the corresponding area of communication in general. We might say that, whereas the expressionistic emphasis reveals the ways in which the poet, with an attitude, embodies it in appropriate gesture, communication deals with the choice of gesture for the inducement of corresponding attitudes. Sensory imagery has this same communicative function, inviting the reader, within the limits of the fiction at least, to make himself over in the image of the imagery.

Considering the poem from this point of view, we begin with the incantatory elements in art, the ways of leading in or leading on the hypothetical audience X to which the poem, as a medium, is addressed (though this hypothetical audience X be nothing more concrete, as regards social relations, than a critical aspect of the poet's own personality). Even Freud's dream had a censor; but the poet's censor is still more exacting, as his shapings and revisions are made for the purpose of forestalling resistances (be those an essay reader's resistances to arguments and evidence or the novel reader's resistance to developments of narrative or character). We move here into the sphere of rhetoric (reader-writer relationships, an aspect of art that Freud explicitly impinges upon only to a degree in his analysis of wit), with the notion of address being most evident in oration and letter, less so in drama, and least in the lyric. Roughly, I should say that the slightest presence of revision is per se indication of a poet's feeling that his work is addressed (if only, as Mead might say, the address of an "I" to its "me").

Here would enter consideration of formal devices, ways of pointing up and fulfilling expectations, of living up to a contract with the reader (as Wordsworth and Coleridge might put it), of easing by transition or sharpening by ellipsis; in short, all that falls within the sphere of incantation, imprecation, exhortation, inducement, weaving and releasing of spells; matters of style and form, of meter and rhythm, as contributing to these results; and thence to the conventions and social values that the poet draws upon in forming the appropriate recipes for the roles of protagonist and antagonist, into which the total agon is analytically broken down, with sub-

sidiary roles polarized about one or the other of the two agonists tapering off to form a region of overlap between the two principles—the ground of the agon. Here, as the reverse of prayer, would come also invective, indictment, oath. And the gestures might well be traced down eventually to choices far closer to bodily pantomime than is revealed on the level of social evaluation alone (as were a poet, seeking the gestures appropriate for the conveying of a social negativeness, to draw finally upon imagery of disgust, and perhaps even, at felicitous moments, to select his speech by playing up the very consonants that come nearest to the enacting of repulsion).

As to the poem as chart: the Freudian emphasis upon the pun brings it about that something can only be in so far as it is something else. But, aside from these ambiguities, there is also a statement's value as being exactly what it is. Perhaps we could best indicate what we mean by speaking of the poem as chart if we called it the poet's contribution to an informal dictionary. As with proverbs, he finds some experience or relationship typical, or recurrent, or significant enough for him to need a word for it. Except that his way of defining the word is not to use purely conceptual terms, as in a formal dictionary, but to show how his vision behaves, with appropriate attitudes. In this, again, it is like the proverb that does not merely name but names vindictively, or plaintively, or promisingly, or consolingly, etc. His namings need not be new ones. Often they are but memorializings of an experience long recognized.

But, essentially, they are enactments, with every form of expression being capable of treatment as the efficient extension of one aspect or another of ritual drama (so that even the scientific essay would have its measure of choreography, its pedestrian pace itself being analyzed as gesture or incantation, its polysyllables being as style the mimetics of a distinct monasticism, etc.). And this observation, whereby we have willy-nilly slipped back into the former subject, the symbolic act as prayer, leads us to observe that the three aspects of the poem, here proposed, are not elements that can be isolated in the poem itself, with one line revealing the "dream," another the "prayer," and a third the "chart." They

merely suggest three convenient modes in which to approach the task of analysis.⁸

The primary category, for the explicit purposes of literary criticism, would thus seem to me to be that of communication rather than that of wish, with its disguises, frustrations, and fulfillments. Wishes themselves, in fact, become from this point of view analyzable as purposes that get their shape from the poet's perspective in general (while this perspective is in turn shaped by the collective medium of communication). The choice of communication also has the advantage, from the sociological point of view, that it resists the Freudian tendency to overplay the psychological factor (as the total medium of communication is not merely that of words, colors, forms, etc., or of the values and conventions with which these are endowed, but also the productive materials, co-operative resources, property rights, authorities, and their various bottlenecks, which figure in the total act of human conversation).

Hence, to sum up: I should say that, for the explicit purposes of literary criticism, we should require more emphasis than the Freudian structure gives, (1) to the proportional strategy as against the essentializing one, (2) to matriarchal symbolizations as against the Freudian patriarchal bias, (3) to poem as prayer and chart, as against simply the poem as dream.

But I fully recognize that, once the ingenious and complex structure has been erected, nearly anyone can turn up with proposals that it be given a little more of this, a little less of that, a pinch of so-and-so, etc. And I recognize that, above all, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the man who, by his insight, his energy, and his remarkably keen powers of articulation, made such tinkering possible. It is almost fabulous to think that, after so many centuries of the family, it is only now that this central factor in our social organization has attained its counterpart in an organized critique of the family and of the ways in which the informative experience with familiar roles may be carried over, or "metaphored," into the experience with extrafamilial roles, giving these latter, in so far as they are, or are felt to be, analogous with the former, a structure of interpretations and attitudes borrowed from the former. And in so far as poets, like everyone else, are regularly

involved in such informative familiar relationships, long before any but a few rudimentary bodily gestures are available for communicative use (with their first use unquestionably being the purely self-expressive one), the child is indeed the adult poet's father, as he is the father of us all (if not so in essence, then at least as regards an important predisposing factor "to look out for"). Thence we get to "like father like son." And thence we get to Freud's brilliant documentation of this ancestry, as it affects the maintenance of a continuity in the growing personality.

Only if we eliminate biography entirely as a relevant fact about poetic organization can we eliminate the importance of the psychoanalyst's search for universal patterns of biography (as revealed in the search for basic myths which recur in new guises as a theme with variations); and we can eliminate biography as a relevant fact about poetic organization only if we consider the work of art as if it were written neither by people nor for people, involving neither inducements nor resistances.⁹ Such can be done, but the cost is tremendous in so far as the critic considers it his task to disclose the poem's eventfulness.

However, this is decidedly not the same thing as saying that "we cannot appreciate the poem without knowing about its relation to the poet's life as an individual." Rather, it is equivalent to saying: "We cannot understand a poem's structure without understanding the function of that structure. And to understand its function we must understand its purpose." To be sure, there are respects in which the poem, as purpose, is doing things for the poet that it is doing for no one else. For instance, I think it can be shown by analysis of the imagery in Coleridge's "Mystery Poems" that one of the battles being fought there is an attempt to get self-redemption by the poet's striving for the vicarious or ritualistic redemption of his drug. It is obvious that this aspect of the equational structure is private and would best merit discussion when one is discussing the strategy of one man in its particularities. Readers in general will respond only to the sense of guilt, which was sharpened for Coleridge by his particular burden of addiction, but which may be sharpened for each reader by totally different particularities of experience. But if you do not discuss the poem's structure as a

function of symbolic redemption at all (as a kind of private enterprise Mass, with important ingredients of a black Mass), the observations you make about its structure are much more likely to be gratuitous and arbitrary (quite as only the most felicitous of observers could relevantly describe the distribution of men and postures in a football game if he had no knowledge of the game's purpose and did not discuss its formations as oppositional tactics for the carrying-out of this purpose, but treated the spectacle simply as the manifestation of a desire to instruct and amuse).

Thus, in the case of *The Ancient Mariner*, knowledge of Coleridge's personal problems may enlighten us as to the particular burdens that the Pilot's boy ("who now doth crazy go") took upon himself as scapegoat for the poet alone. But his appearance in the poem cannot be understood at all, except in superficial terms of the interesting or the picturesque, if we do not grasp his function as a scapegoat of some sort—a victimized vessel for drawing off the most malign aspects of the curse that afflicts the "greybeard loon" whose cure had been effected under the dubious aegis of moonlight. And I believe that such a functional approach is the only one that can lead into a profitable analysis of a poem's structure even on the purely technical level. I remember how, for instance, I had pondered for years the reference to the "silly buckets" filled with curative rain. I noted the epithet as surprising, picturesque, and interesting. I knew that it was doing something, but I wasn't quite sure what. But as soon as I looked upon the Pilot's boy as a scapegoat, I saw that the word silly was a technical foreshadowing of the fate that befell this figure in the poem. The structure itself became more apparent: the "loon"-atic Mariner begins his cure from drought under the aegis of a moon that causes a silly rain, thence by synecdoche to silly buckets, and the most malignant features of this problematic cure are transferred to the Pilot's boy who now doth crazy go. Now, if you want to confine your observations to the one poem, you have a structural-functional-technical analysis of some important relationships within the poem itself. If you wish to trail the matter farther afield, into the equational structure of other work by Coleridge, you can back your interpretation of the moon by such reference as that to

"moon-blasted madness," which gives you increased authority to discern lunatic ingredients in the lunar. His letters, where he talks of his addiction in imagery like that of the "Mystery Poems" and contemplates entering an insane asylum for a cure, entitle you to begin looking for traces of the drug as an ingredient in the redemptive problem. His letters also explicitly place the drug in the same cluster with the serpent; hence, we begin to discern what is going on when the Mariner transubstantiates the water snakes, in removing them from the category of the loathsome and accursed to the category of the blessed and beautiful. So much should be enough for the moment. Since the poem is constructed about an opposition between punishments under the aegis of the sun and cure under the aegis of the moon, one could proceed in other works to disclose the two sets of equations clustered about these two principles. Indeed, even in *The Ancient Mariner* itself we get a momentous cue, as the sun is explicitly said to be "like God's own head." But, for the moment, all I would maintain is that, if we had but this one poem by Coleridge, and knew not one other thing about him, we could not get an insight into its structure until we began with an awareness of its function as a symbolic redemptive process.

I can imagine a time when the psychological picture will be so well known and taken into account—when we shall have gone so far beyond Freud's initial concerns—that a reference to the polymorphous perverse of the infantile, for instance, will seem far too general—a mere first approximation. Everyone provides an instance of the polymorphous perverse, in attenuated form, at a moment of hesitancy; caught in the trackless maze of an unresolved, and even undefined, conflict, he regresses along this channel and that, in a formless experimentation that "tries anything and everything, somewhat." And in so far as his puzzle is resolved into pace, and steady rhythms of a progressive way out are established, there is always the likelihood that this solution will maintain continuity with the past of the poet's personality by a covert drawing upon analogies with this past. Hence the poet or speculator, no matter how new the characters with which he is now concerned, will give them somewhat the roles of past characters;

whereat I see nothing unusual about the thought that a mature and highly complex philosophy might be so organized as to be surrogate for, let us say, a kind of adult breast-feeding—or, in those more concerned with alienation, a kind of adult weaning. Such categories do not by any means encompass the totality of a communicative structure; but they are part of it, and the imagery and transitions of the poem itself cannot disclose their full logic until such factors are taken into account.

However, I have spoken of pace. And perhaps I might conclude with some words on the bearing that the Freudian technique has upon the matter of pace. The Freudian procedure is primarily designed to break down a rhythm grown obsessive, to confront the systematic pieties of the patient's misery with systematic impieties of the clinic.¹⁰ But the emphasis here is more upon the breaking of a malign rhythm than upon the upbuilding of a benign one. There is no place in this technique for examining the available resources whereby the adoption of total dramatic enactment may lead to correspondingly proper attitude. There is no talk of games, of dance, of manual and physical actions, of historical role, as a "way in" to this new upbuilding. The sedentary patient is given a sedentary cure. The theory of rhythms—work rhythms, dance rhythms, march rhythms—is no explicit part of this scheme, which is primarily designed to break old rhythms rather than to establish new ones.

The establishing of a new pace, beyond the smashing of the old puzzle, would involve in the end a rounded philosophy of the drama. Freud, since his subject is conflict, hovers continually about the edges of such a philosophy; yet it is not dialectical enough. For this reason Marxists properly resent his theories, even though one could, by culling incidental sentences from his works, fit him comfortably into the Marxist perspective. But the Marxists are wrong, I think, in resenting him as an irrationalist, for there is nothing more rational than the systematic recognition of irrational and nonrational factors. And I should say that both Freudians and Marxists are wrong in so far as they cannot put their theories together, by an overall theory of drama itself (as they should be

able to do, since Freud gives us the material of the closet drama, and Marx the material of the problem play, the one worked out in terms of personal conflicts, the other in terms of public conflicts.)

The approach would require explicitly the analysis of role: salvation via change or purification of identity (purification in either the moral or chemical sense); different typical relationships between individual and group (as charted attitudinally in proverbs, and in complex works treated as sophisticated variants); modes of acceptance, rejection, self-acceptance, rejection¹¹ ("the enemies of my enemies are my friends"); transitional disembodiment as intermediate step between old self and new self (the spirituality of Shelley and of the Freudian cure itself); monasticism in the development of methods that fix a transitional or other-worldly stage, thereby making the evanescent itself into a kind of permanency—with all these modes of enactment finally employing, as part of the gesture idiom, the responses of the body itself as actor. (If one sought to employ Freud, as is, for the analysis of the poem, one would find almost nothing on poetic posture or pantomime, tonality, the significance of different styles and rhythmic patterns, nothing of this behaviorism.) Such, it seems to me, would be necessary, and much more in that direction, before we could so extend Freud's perspective that it revealed the major events going on in art.

But such revisions would by no means be anti-Freudian. They would be the kind of extensions required by reason of the fact that the symbolic act of art, whatever its analogies with the symbolic act of neurosis, also has important divergencies from the symbolic act of neurosis. They would be extensions designed to take into account the full play of communicative and realistic ingredients that comprise so large an aspect of poetic structure.

¹ The essentializing strategy has its function when dealing with classes of items; the proportional one is for dealing with an item in its uniqueness. By isolating the matter of voluntarism, we put Freud in a line or class with Augustine. By isolating the matter of his concern with a distinction between unconscious and conscious, we may put him in a line with Leibniz's distinc-

tion between perception and apperception. Or we could link him with the Spinozistic *conatus* and the Schopenhauerian will. Or, as a rationalist, he falls into the bin with Aquinas (who is himself most conveniently isolated as a rationalist if you employ the essentializing as against the proportional strategy, stressing what he added rather than what he retained.) Many arguments seem to hinge about the fact that there is an un verbalized disagreement as to the choice between these strategies. The same man, for instance, who might employ the essentializing strategy in proclaiming Aquinas as a rationalist, taking as the significant factor in Aquinas' philosophy his additions to rationalism rather than considering this as an ingredient in a faith philosophy, might object to the bracketing of Aquinas and Freud (here shifting to the proportional strategy, as he pointed out the totally different materials with which Aquinas surrounded his rational principle).

² We may distinguish between a public and universal motive. In so far as one acts in a certain way because of his connection with a business or party, he would act from a public motive. His need of response to a new glandular stimulation at adolescence, on the other hand, would arise regardless of social values, and in that sense would be at once private and universal. The particular forms in which he expressed this need would, of course, be channeled in accordance with public or social factors.

³ Perhaps, to avoid confusion, I should call attention to the fact that symbolic in this context is being used differently by me from its use in the expression "symbolic action." If a man crosses a street, it is a practical act. If he writes a book about crossings—crossing streets, bridges, oceans, etc.—that is a symbolic act. Symbolic, as used in the restricted sense (in contrast with free association) would refer to the imputation of an absolute meaning to a crossing, a meaning that I might impute even before reading the book in question. Against this, I should maintain: One can never know what a crossing means, in a specific book, until he has studied its tie-up with other imagery in that particular book.

⁴ Maybe the kind of forgetting that is revealed by psychoanalysis could, within this frame, be better characterized as an incomplete forgetting. That is, whereas table, for instance, acquires an absolute and emotionally neutral meaning, as a name merely for a class of objects, by a merging of all the contexts involving the presence of a table, a table becomes symbolic, or a double *entendre*, or more than table, when some particular informative context is more important than the others. That is, when table, as used by the poet, has overtones of, let us say, *one* table at which his mother worked when he was a child. In this way the table, its food, and the cloth may become surrogates for the mother, her breasts, and her apron. And incest awe may become merged with "mustn't touch" injunctions, stemming from attempts to keep the child from meddling with the objects on the table. In a dream play by Edmund Wilson, *The Crime in the Whistler Room*, there are two worlds of plot, with the characters belonging in the one world looking upon those in the other as dead, and the hero of this living world taking a dream shape as werewolf. The worlds switch back and forth, depending upon the presence or removal of a gate-leg table. In this instance I think we should not be far wrong in attributing some such content as the above to

the table when considering it as a fulcrum upon which the structure of the plot is swung.

⁵ It is wrong, I think, to consider Freud's general picture as that of an individual psychology. Adler's start from the concept of ego compensation fits this description par excellence. But Freud's is a family psychology. He has offered a critique of the family, though it is the family of a neopatriarch. It is interesting to watch Freud, in his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, frankly shifting between the primacy of group psychology and the primacy of individual psychology, changing his mind as he debates with himself in public and leaves in his pages the record of his fluctuations, frankly stated as such. Finally, he compromises by leaving both, drawing individual psychology from the role of the monopolistic father, and group psychology from the roles of the sons, deprived of sexual gratification by the monopolistic father, and banded together for their mutual benefit. But note that the whole picture is that of a family albeit of a family in which the woman is a mere passive object of male wealth.

⁶ Or you might put it this way: Rebirth would require a killing of the old self. Such symbolic suicide, to be complete, would require a snapping of the total ancestral line (as being an integral aspect of one's identity). Hence, a tendency for the emancipatory crime to become sexually ambivalent. Freud's patriarchal emphasis leads to an overstress upon father-rejection as a basic cause rather than as a by-product of conversion (the Kierkegaard earthquake that was accompanied by a changed attitude toward his father). Suicide, to be thorough, would have to go farther, and the phenomena of identity revealed in totemism might require the introduction of matricidal ingredients also. Freud himself, toward the end of *Totem and Taboo*, gives us an opening wedge by stating frankly, "In this evolution I am at a loss to indicate the place of the great maternal deities who perhaps everywhere preceded the paternal deities. . . ." This same patriarchal emphasis also reinforces the Freudian tendency to treat social love as a mere sublimation of balked male sexual appetite, whereas a more matriarchal concern, with the Madonna and Child relationship, would suggest a place for affection as a primary biological motivation. Not even a naturalistic account of motivation would necessarily require re-enforcement from the debunking strategy (in accordance with which the real motives would be incipient perversions, and social motives as we know them would be but their appearances, or censored disguise).

⁷ Might not the sacrificial figure (as parent, king, or god) also at times derive from no resistance or vindictiveness whatsoever, but be the recipient of the burden simply through "having stronger shoulders, better able to bear it?" And might the choice of guilty scapegoats (such as a bad father) be but a secondary development for accommodating this socialization of a loss to the patterns of legality?

⁸ Dream has its opposite, nightmare; prayer has its opposite, oath. Charts merely vary—in scope and relevance. In *Kubla Khan*, automatically composed during an opium dream, the dream ingredient is uppermost. In *The Ancient Mariner*, the prayer ingredient is uppermost. In *Dejection* and *The Pains of Sleep*, the chart ingredient is uppermost: here Coleridge is explicitly discussing his situation.

⁹ Those who stress form of this sort, as against content, usually feel that they are concerned with judgments of excellence as against judgments of the merely representative. Yet, just as a content category such as the Oedipus complex is neutral, i.e., includes both good and bad examples of its kind, so does a form category, such as sonnet or iambic pentameter, include both good and bad examples of its kind. In fact, though categories or classifications may be employed for evaluative purposes, they should be of themselves nonevaluative. Apples is a neutral, nonevaluative class, including firm apples and rotten ones. Categories that are in themselves evaluative are merely circular arguments—disguised ways of saying “this is good because it is good.” The orthodox strategy of disguise is to break the statement into two parts, such as: “This is good because it has form; and form is good.” The lure behind the feeling that the miracle of evaluation can be replaced by a codified scientific routine of evaluation seems to get its backing from the hope that a concept of quality can be matched by a number. The terms missing may be revealed by a diagram, thus:

Quantity	Number
Weight	Pound
Length	Foot
Duration	Hour
Quality	()
Excellence	()
Inferiority	()

Often the strategy of concealment is accomplished by an ambiguity, as the critic sometimes uses the term “poetry” to designate good poetry, and sometimes uses it to designate “poetry, any poetry, good, bad, or indifferent.” I do, however, strongly sympathize with the formalists, as against the sociologists, when the sociologist treats poetry simply as a kind of haphazard sociological survey—a report about world conditions that often shows commendable intuitive insight but is handicapped by a poor methodology of research and controls.

¹⁰ There are styles of cure, shifting from age to age, because each novelty becomes a commonplace, so that the patient integrates his conflict with the ingredients of the old cure itself, thus making them part of his obsession. Hence, the need for a new method of jolting. Thus, I should imagine that a patient who had got into difficulties after mastering the Freudian technique would present the most obstinate problems for a Freudian cure. He would require some step beyond Freud. The same observation would apply to shifting styles in a poetry and philosophy, when considered as cures, as the filling of a need.

¹¹ I am indebted to Norbert Guterman for the term “self-acceptance” and to William S. Knickerbocker for the term “rejection of rejection.”

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

Art and Anxiety

ALTHOUGH IN SOME respects incredible, Little Red Ridinghood is obviously a good story, and its simplicity recommends it as an introduction to the necessarily rather speculative discussion of art and anxiety which follows. This tale of the wolf and the grandmother is primitive, folkish and fantastic, and the proper terms for its explication may seem irrelevant to higher forms of art, particularly those that are intellectual and realistic. But I shall go on to suggest that to be effective, those intellectual and realistic elements in imaginative literature must have a double reference, both to the world of outer reality and to the kind of inner situation with which Little Red Ridinghood deals, and that this second kind of reference is the essential one for art.

If it is difficult to suppose that a wolf in a nightcap, especially after it began to speak, could be taken for one's grandmother, it is easy to suppose that one's grandmother—or even one dearer than a grandmother—could be taken for a wolf. According to the modes of their time and place and social station, parents make children human and social. They impose cultural institutions not only on young minds, but on young emotions, and muscles and nerves. This

is an intimate and unremitting process, carried on over a long period of time. Even the best of parents often do it with force and in anger. They also love. But to a very small child the moments of anger are quite separate from those of love, and when his strongest impulses are blocked for incomprehensible reasons by what can seem to him only an unconditionally evil personal force, he responds in his rage with equally unconditional statements of hate and the wish to kill, that is, to remove. He "means" these statements, just as the parent "means" his anger.

Such wishes—conscious, and even put into words—are not necessarily blind instincts or part of a fund of original sin invested in all of us, but conscious and understandable responses to a social situation. Nevertheless, they are not easy for the child to deal with as he grows older. In his love and dependence and desire to be good, he accepts the parent's authority pretty much in the parent's terms, and within that scheme can find no place for those negative, destructive feelings which were not only organized and a part of his developing personality, but very difficult to separate from his inner sense of the parents. As a result, by processes now familiar to us, these feelings get repressed or detached. But since they still have meaning in reference to the real social situation, they remain active, and cause anxiety and a sense of guilt.

What a relief to an anxious child the thought of a wolf can be! It was not, after all, the parental image to which that uncomfortable complex of rage and fear had been attached, but a wolf in the grandmother's guise. Although it is inconceivable that a child should want to kill its grandmother, it is in the nature of a wolf to do so, and hence bears thinking about. And if the wolf ate up the beloved grandmother to whom the propitiatory child was carrying a basket of goodies, how much more appropriate to fear and hate it, although for a healthy child the thought of a wolf is not really very frightening except when the wolf is also one's grandmother. But even the wolf, in so far as he is frightening, is killed and disposed of, not by the child, but by a kindly woodcutter, who is, like the parental figures, a protector against just such dangers as the wolf represents.

The importance of this kind of analysis, to which I shall return later on, is not to show that an emotionally satisfactory story satis-

fies emotional needs, some of them unconscious, and that these unconscious elements are much more clearly understood as a result of Freudian techniques. Most critics would agree to this. What they question is the value of Freudian techniques in the positive and discriminating judgment of art as art. As Lionel Trilling pointed out in a recent number of the *Partisan Review*, the acts of every person are influenced by the unconscious, and if the writer is often neurotic so is the scientist or businessman. What is important about the writer is his "power of controlling his neuroticism. He shapes his fantasies, he gives them social reference." The writer "works in the raw material we all have" and what is significant is what he does with it, and that in turn depends on his artistic gifts. The artist, unlike the dreamer, dominates his illusion, and makes it serve the purposes of closer and truer relation with reality. And in an earlier article in the *Kenyon Review* Mr. Trilling had said that Freudian psychology, by its founder's own admission, "can do nothing toward elucidation of the nature of the artistic gift, nor can it explain the means by which the artist works—artistic technique."

Actually, in recent years, as a result of innumerable case studies, a good deal of light has been thrown on the differing unconscious determinants of such different professional interests as those of the inventor, the surgeon, the promoter, the merchant, the banker, and the scholar, especially when they have a strong and successful drive behind them. The early lives of these types have as different "profiles" as those outlined in psychosomatic medicine for typical sufferers from diabetes or asthma or angina. If enough of the individual's past can be recovered, talents can be traced to emotional attachments and inhibitions resulting from very specific conditions and events of childhood. Studies of wolf-boys and of neglected children show that intelligence itself is a social product, a result of the child's treatment during the first two years. The idiot is a "private" person.

The imaginative writer's interests are no more determined by unconscious elements than those of the scientist and merchant, though they do not find expression so soon or so directly in the world of fact and practical affairs. However doctrinaire and artistically naïve it may appear, Brill's famous early essay on "Poetry as an Oral

Outlet" helps us to understand the emotional satisfactions which shape the writer's talent. But if we are learning much more about the artist's nature and about the rather special way by which he reaches "reality" and deals with it, this is not, as Mr. Trilling rightly contends, the same thing as making a qualitative evaluation of art itself. In the orthodox Freudian journals, art has been treated symptomatically in much the same fashion as dreams, although in the case of works of art it is seldom possible to practice the prolonged free-associational examination which the "deep" analysis of a dream requires. The emphasis has been on the artist rather than the work of art, as it so often is in academic scholarship, and the effect is reductive, as it is in the simpler Marxist criticism, making the particular qualities of a work of art effect-signs of the psychic or social conditions under which it was produced, of the Oedipal conflict or the contradictions of capitalism.

An artist's changing relations—never free from conflict—with those who bring him up as a child, determine his character and show in his work. Nor can his work fail to reflect, directly or indirectly, the social conflicts of his period. It is not, however, primarily to find indications of these inner and outer conflicts that people read books and look at paintings. Psychiatrists study dreams for that purpose, but dreams are private, and they have—according to Freud—only one condition to satisfy, that they should permit the sleeper to go on sleeping. Though the artist may create to please himself, or as a form of daydreaming, his work is art to the extent that it is communal, that it has social meaning. For this there are many conditions to fulfill, and many kinds and degrees of success in fulfilling them, though we may note that in doing this art uses many of the symbols and the mechanisms of displacement, condensation, splitting and the like which Freud defined in his study of the dream. As opposed to the dream, however, art is a positive, consciously directed social accomplishment, like the work of the scientist, the manufacturer, the builder.

Although it may be incidentally interesting to know what made a man a scientist—what unconscious needs, displaced affections, symbolic associations—we need only understand his particular science to evaluate the success of a scientific experiment. The critical refer-

ences are not to the scientist's inner life but to the conditions of the experiment and the hypothesis which it was intended to establish, as the judgment of a diplomatic negotiation takes into account the world situation at the time and the purposes the negotiators were trying to accomplish. So, we may say, a critic need take into account only artistic means and purposes in evaluating, which is his primary concern, the success with which an artist fulfills the conditions of his art in terms of that art.

But when all this is said, and the critic has protected his domain against the encroachments of the psychologists, the difficulties that have always beset aesthetic inquiry are still not solved. For just what are the conditions that art must satisfy, and what objective references have we for deciding its success in satisfying them?

In the analysis of the tale of Little Red Ridinghood, we saw with what considerable economy and ingenuity it met the conditions that were set for it by certain situations to which it had reference in the unconscious psychic life of its young listeners. The wolf had to replace the grandmother and yet be quite clearly separated, as a person, from the grandmother. The child should be involved in the experience, and yet in such a way that she should not feel responsibly implicated in the grandmother's death. The wolf should be killed by a protective parental figure. In the version by the brothers Grimm, both Red Ridinghood and the grandmother are taken out alive from the stomach of the wolf. Children, observing pregnant women, commonly suppose that the babies are in the stomach. How did they they get in? The mothers must have swallowed them. "I could just eat him up," adoring elders say of luscious infants. The children take this more or less literally, since they themselves are aggressive biters. This all causes a certain amount of anxiety, and it is a relief to have the anxiety acknowledged and dealt with socially in the projections and transferences of a dramatic fable. In real life, ordinarily, only wolves and tigers eat infants, but human and divine cannibalism is common in literature; in Swift's "Modest Proposal," for instance, or Hansel and Gretel, or pre-Olympian myth as reported by Hesiod. A great deal can be made of other significant details in Little Red Ridinghood, such as the redness of the hood, but they need not detain us now.

Although the best-loved folk tales use dream symbols, they are not like dreams, but have the completeness, coherence, and unity of a work of art. A long series of tellers have shaped the material, given it significant form, brought it to a satisfying conclusion. Obviously their own unconsciousnesses have a part in the process, but the creative narrators are also influenced by stories they enjoyed as children, by their previous successes and failures in arousing or delighting a youthful audience, and by an intuitive sense of what any given audience wants. They are like palm readers who can tell when they are getting close to the truth by slight physical responses in the hand itself. Though the folk tale is an art form, criticism of it is limited and not very revealing if it cannot take into account these psychic conditions which ultimately determine the success or failure of a tale. We cannot judge the form of a work of art unless we see how that form is related to its function. We can feel that a story is successful, and make a good many pertinent observations in comparing it with other stories, following critically and empirically the path that the writer follows, partly consciously, partly intuitively, in the experimental mastery of his art. But we cannot very fully or profoundly explain a story's success without knowing actually what it is that a story does.

Although imaginative literature is often informative, this is not its distinguishing characteristic, and a simple story like *Red Ridinghood* does not, in any sense, lead its hearers to a knowledge of relationships. Its symbols evoke responses which are essentially conditioned reflexes, and a knowledge on the child's part of the relationship of stimulus to response is neither the cause nor the result of his being moved by the story, nor will a statement describing any such relationship affect very much its operations, any more than a psychiatrist's pointing out, early in an analysis, the probable cause of a phobia can do much to lessen its intensity.

A successful folk tale gains its effect by awakening reflexively, with symbols of a particular kind, unconscious impulses. And any description or definition of the artistic experience which fails to take into account these significant relations to an inner reality will necessarily seem limited or mysterious, especially since it must also recognize that the most significant relations in art are not to an external

reality, social or historical, outside the bounds of the individual, self-contained work of art. Yet a failure to recognize the importance of responses in the unconscious is found even in the formulations of Deweyans and philosophical naturalists who might be expected to be most sympathetic to a functional and psychologic interpretation of art.

In "A Natural History of the Aesthetic Transaction," which Eliseo Vivas contributed to the symposium, *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, he differentiated art from morals, science, and religion, wherein we think of causes and consequences, and wherein the object of the experience is, so to speak, "a moment connected with a wider complex of moments in a transitive chain that goes on indefinitely." The aesthetic experience, on the contrary, is "an experience of rapt attention which involves the intransitive apprehension of an object's immanent meanings in their full presentational immediacy." Rapt attention there certainly is, when a story is well told, and we know a good deal about the means by which that state of raptness is created, but what are these immanent meanings and how do they draw to themselves the emotions they arouse? In this "intransitive" situation, since movement cannot go beyond the bounds of the self-contained and self-sufficient work of art, it must necessarily be movement within the psyche of the recipient or contemplator. Through giving oneself up to the artist as through giving oneself up to the analyst, a transfer occurs which attaches to the present and actual experiences apparently presented in the art, emotional meanings proper to an earlier and now buried experience.

2

To say that art gives expression to repressed material of great emotional significance is merely a beginning, of course, and to stop there is to remain with the earlier Freudian interpretation of art against which so many objections have properly been made. If art is merely a substitute gratification of repressed desires in such disguised form that they can get by the censor, then art is essentially the same as a dream, even though it may, by its realism and coher-

ence, seem to take account of external reality. And criticism is largely a matter of penetrating the disguises and discovering what is really behind them. It has no criteria for the work of art as such, except the extent to which it reveals its creator's early inner life; its approach is scientific, cognitive, referential.

But such an approach was inadequate artistically because it was inadequate psychologically. Freud so related sex, libido and love that family and social relationships could exist only at the expense of instinctual gratifications; the role of the superego was negative and repressive; and although social activities could be understood as projections, displacements and transformations of instinctual and unconscious needs, the stages of individual psychic development were considered fixed, phylogenetically, for all persons, and no adequate account was taken of the reciprocal influence of individual cultures and particular social circumstances in shaping the development, both conscious and unconscious, of the individual.

Such ideas have been under extensive revision for years on both sides of the Atlantic, and the value of psychiatry in understanding the literary process need no longer be judged by the earlier inadequacies of Freudian doctrine. It seems to me, for instance, that in discussions of anxiety, particularly in the English psychoanalytic journals, by writers like Melanie Klein, Ella Freeman Sharpe, W. D. R. Fairbairn, Edward Glover and Marjorie Brierley, we not only understand the positive psychic role of social influences, but can analyze the conditions that art which has the profoundest effect must meet in its use of both conscious and unconscious materials. We can therefore relevantly judge it, not for what it reveals, but for what it does.

As an approach to these ideas can we analyze a more sophisticated piece of literature, with much more social and intellectual content, in the same terms as *Little Red Ridinghood*? In Richard Wright's *Native Son* the decisive event is the murder of a young white girl by a Negro, and the burning of her body in the furnace, a very unlikely subject, one might think, for a young Negro to choose for a propagandist novel. But the selection of this scene was determined by a forgotten incident of great emotional significance for the writer, and its imaginative development expressed both hatred for

the girl, as white, and strong sexual desire for her, unconsummated even in the imagination except through the symbolic rape of murder. Such impulses are dangerous psychically as well as socially, and cause much anxiety. They cannot always be expressed so frankly. In much art which is predominantly defensive they are so deeply buried that they can hardly be discerned. When such impulses are dramatized, it must be in conjunction with forms of punishment. This is not primarily to make the fantasy socially acceptable; the inner need for punishment is just as deeply motivated as the impulse to crime, and is inseparable from it. Our antiquated system of courts and prisons is maintained not so much because it is effective in preventing crime, but because it satisfies the idea of inevitable punishment in the minds of noncriminals who otherwise would be made anxious by their imaginative excitement over crime in the newspapers and popular literature.

In Richard Wright's case, however, the legal prosecution of Bigger Thomas was not enough, because of the author's feelings that the law, on another level, represented a threat to him in its injustice toward Negroes, a kind of injustice that Communism might be expected to abolish. And as in *Little Red Ridinghood*, though Bigger Thomas acted as agent for the writer and reader in satisfying forbidden wishes, it was necessary for him to be separated from them in other respects. This was done, not so much by making him a different kind of person, as by showing, in the manner of the naturalist novel, that Bigger's crime was a consequence of his social circumstances, and therefore as appropriate and understandable as the wolf's eating the grandmother. Although the author is a Negro and most readers are white, the psychic situation is the same, except that Bigger's being a Negro makes our conscious separation from the murderer easier. And despite its social doctrines the book makes full emotional and imaginative use of the deeper prejudices against Negroes and the part they play in dream fantasies, of women especially. But the woman in the novel is punished, too, of course.

Although he did not analyze the novel in this fashion, Dr. Frederic Wertham has recently published a brief report on conversations with Richard Wright in which he uncovered some unconscious determinants of the material in *Native Son*. In trying to judge the extent to

which artists do consciously shape their material, we should notice Dr. Wertham's report that "the root experiences intimately related to the key scene of the novel were unavailable to his consciousness at the time of the novel and at the beginning of our experiment when he reflected on the sources of his inspiration for the creation of the Dalton household," and that "comparison of the long-forgotten memories presented in this study with the self-explanation of *Native Son* in 'How Bigger Was Born' show the latter is a conscious rationalization."

Both *Native Son* and Little Red Ridinghood may be compared to what Miss Sharpe calls the "cautionary tale." A simple example is: If you go into the jungle, a lion may eat you. This seems too simple. After all, lions do eat people, and a child may pleasantly excite himself with thoughts of such a remote danger. But we know what a lion meant in the case of a little boy reported by Anna Freud in her book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*.

In his fantasies, this lad was attended by a tame lion, very fierce in demeanor. When grown-ups of his acquaintance first saw it, they were terrified, but their terror changed to wonder when they found the beast completely submissive to the boy's command. Although he was not aware of the connection, a train of associational patterns made it clear that the lion was his father, and that the fantasy gave the boy relief by letting him imagine himself in complete control of a person whose behavior actually filled him with confusion and anxiety. And if we assign "jungle" or "bush" its usual meaning in Freudian symbolism, the cautionary sentence, "If you go in the jungle a lion will eat you," may be read as a threat from the father in an Oedipal situation.

This assigning of symbolic or derived value to events in outer reality that appear to have their own quite adequate tensions and excitements becomes far more plausible if we consider the way children are brought up in our civilization. In the early years parents intervene at all points in children's experience of the outer world. Prolonged battles, full of emotion on both sides, go on over feeding and toilet training. A child is taught to avoid situations of danger, not by experiencing the practical consequences, but by parental restraint, enforced by punishments, far more complicated in aspect

than a fall or a cut finger. The same prohibitions and punishments are used against aggressive and disrespectful behavior. Since the reasons are equally incomprehensible, it is not surprising that a child should not at first distinguish between the withdrawing of his hand from a hot iron and from his penis, and that because of this early association, accidents and the excitement of physical dangers often replace as "screen memories" painful incidents and excitements of quite another kind.

But obviously, as we noted in examining Little Red Ridinghood, the relation of parents to children is not chiefly one of coercion and restraint. The child not only finds within the family his comfort, his security and his happiness, but he becomes humane and social by constant imitation of those about him, by making their ways his own. He repeats not only the actions and words of other members of his family, but also their emotional responses to objects and incidents with which he has had little direct experience. Even their forbidding what he wants to do becomes part of him, and conscious or unconscious inhibition takes the place of external restraint. It is very difficult to say at what point this imitated material becomes his own, to distinguish between original impulses and the remembered actions of others, between original thoughts and the echoes of what others have said, a difficulty that makes it easy to understand paranoia and other phenomena of projection, in which one's own thoughts and wishes are mistaken for the words and deeds of other men.

Peculiar to the individual is the selection and organization, conscious or unconscious, of this social material, which is deeply involved emotionally with the people from whom it is adopted. And some of it, for reasons discussed earlier, becomes repressed. Attached to these repressed impulses are the parental aggressions against them, which make the parents seem "bad objects." These feelings occasion anxiety and a sense of separation which leads in turn to a desire to be identified with the parents in their "good" aspects, to be reunited with them in security and love.

Repressed destructive feelings are disintegrative, not only because they split up the relationship with loved persons, but because they isolate a part of the self. Love is integrative, and of this integration,

which is social in character, the specifically sexual is only a part and seldom a dominant part. Premature or excessive sexuality in children results from emotional insecurity, and in later life sexuality can be used as a social instrument, as Alexander R. Martin has said, "in the service of degradation, humiliation and deprivation." The fundamental pattern is one of conflict and reconciliation, of separation and return, of man's fall and return to grace. It is the pattern of analytic therapy, with the emotional transfer to the therapist, and with the reintegrative recovery, if the analysis is successful, of lost parts of the self.

But we also know from analysis that within this pattern many variations and complexities are possible in the attempts to deal with repressed material, or with internalized "bad objects" which are profoundly needed but also associated with pain and separation, as the breast may be after weaning. W. R. D. Fairbairn shows how guilt develops as a moral defense against the terrible aspects of parental figures. Going further than the small boy in Anna Freud's case, a child may convert an original situation in which he is surrounded by bad objects into a new situation in which the objects are good and he himself is bad. We may observe different forms of this process in the relations of Kafka and Kierkegaard to their fathers, and in the way in which Dostoevsky "converted" the cruelty with which he was treated by the Tsar. And in our time when terribleness outside us reinforces the terrible within, and loss of faith in social reform has, for many, wiped out this hopeful defense against anxiety, it is easy to understand why a preoccupation with sin and guilt has reappeared and why grace has been sought in a supernatural union rather than in identification with political movements or with socialist reconstruction. Analysts think that such defense may take other forms, as in a sadistic, demonic identification with bad objects, or in a despairing masochistic giving up to them, which results in what Freud called the death wish, or an attempt to be free of them in both their needed and repellent aspects, by attributing magic strengths to one's own body and products—excrements, for instance, on an infantile level, or thoughts and words later on.

The artist's forms of defense against anxiety, or relief from it, are

highly varied and operate on every level from that of popular fiction which fantasies over and over again the solution of conscious problems and the physical reunion with the beloved, to those profounder works which deal symbolically and indirectly with buried materials, and whose value and meaning have been the subjects of so much aesthetic controversy.

Countering the fears aroused by destructive impulses and fantasies are the efforts at restitution, reconstruction and reparation. The wholeness and integrity of the work, on which Eliseo Vivas put such emphasis, its separateness and identity, marked off as with the black lines around a Rouault figure, the way it returns upon itself instead of merging with the world outside, the realism and living quality of the persons and things recreated in it—all these qualities strengthen both creator and audience against ideas of dissolution and dismemberment, ideas which are also usually expressed or implied by the contents, but not always, when an artist is as deeply repressed as, for instance, was Cézanne. And in the design of a work, in its metrical or musical or architectonic recurrences, there is not merely the soothing, hypnotic maternal quality which Brill has discussed, and which facilitates emotional transfer, but also a constant fulfilling of promises, a relieving of uncertainties and tensions, in the happy return of the expected and desired, in the predictable completion of patterns, in the revelation of something unknown, which, as the unknown, had aroused emotions proper to our own attempts to recover and master detached and antagonistic elements within ourselves.

A similar analysis can be made of humor, which is only in part the permitted social gratification of sexual or sadistic impulses. Dominantly it is an attempt to relieve anxiety by minimizing the threatening aspects of the strange, the aggressive, the difficult and the obscure, and all that recalls early painful oppressions of a paternal character. But this humor works only under special conditions. Its depreciations must not threaten the real social and emotional interests of its hearers, and it needs more than most forms the reassurance of being shared, of being approved and laughed at, to relieve the fears caused by the cruelty and destructiveness it usually also contains. That its points should be objectively valid, that is,

should be true—is also a reassurance, but by no means essential, any more than external plausibility was for the effectiveness of Little Red Ridinghood.

For in humor, as in other literary processes, public and intellectual material derives its significance from its relation to inner conflicts and from the way in which it socializes its materials, and only secondarily from the factual or theoretic soundness of what it says. Art is a form of activity, not a form of truth, and special structures and relationships are aspects of its functions and of the special conditions under which it works. It seems to me that as a result of psychiatric studies we are about to understand the values and forms of art much more profoundly than we have been able to before. What I have said here, of course, is abstract and hypothetical, and can be established only by further work in psychiatry, and by much patient and appreciative re-examination of works of art themselves. The social and psychological aspects of art, as of individual experience, cannot really be separated, except for convenience of discourse, and such a reinterpretation of art—though my emphasis here has been psychological—is not inconsistent with a social interpretation of art, even of the Marxist variety, but is necessary to it.

LESLIE A. FIEDLER

1952
Archetype and Signature

A CENTRAL DOGMA of much recent criticism asserts that biographical information is irrelevant to the understanding and evaluation of poems, and that conversely, poems cannot legitimately be used as material for biography. This double contention is part of a larger position which holds that history is history and art is art, and that to talk about one in terms of the other is to court disaster. In so far as this position rests upon the immortal platitude that it is good to know what one is talking about, it is unexceptionable; in so far as it is a reaction based upon the procedures of pre-Freudian critics, it is hopelessly outdated; and in so far as it depends upon the extreme nominalist definition of a work of art, held by many "formalists" quite unawares, it is metaphysically reprehensible. It has the further inconvenience of being quite unusable in the practical sphere (all of its proponents, in proportion as they are sensitive critics, immediately betray it when speaking of specific works, and particularly of large bodies of work); and, as if that were not enough, it is in blatant contradiction with the assumptions of most serious practicing writers.

That the antibiographical position was once "useful," whatever

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its truth, cannot be denied; it was even once, what is considerably rarer in the field of criticism, amusing; but for a long time now it has been threatening to turn into one of those annoying clichés of the intellectually middle-aged, proffered with all the air of a stimulating heresy. The position was born in dual protest against an excess of Romantic criticism and one of "scientific scholarship." Romantic aesthetics appeared bent on dissolving the formally realized "objective" elements in works of arts into "expression of personality"; while the "scholars," in revolt against Romantic subjectivity, seemed set on casting out all the more shifty questions of value and *gestalt* as "subjective," and concentrating on the kind of "facts" amenable to scientific verification. Needless to say, it was not the newer psychological sciences that the "scholars" had in mind, but such purer disciplines as physics and biology. It was at this point that it became fashionable to talk about literary study as "research," and graphs and tables began to appear in analyses of works of art.

Both the "scholarly" and the Romantic approaches struck the antibiographists as "reductive"—attempts to prove that the work of art was *nothing but* the personality of the Genius behind it, or the sum total of its genetic factors. In answer to both heresies of attack, the antibiographist offered what he came to call the "intrinsic" approach, which turned out, alas, to be another *nothing but* under its show of righteous indignation, namely, the contention that a poem was *nothing but* "words," and its analysis therefore properly *nothing but* a study of syntax and semantics. Any attempt to illuminate a poem by reference to its author's life came therefore to be regarded with horror, unless it confined itself to an examination of his "idiosyncratic use of words." This is not parody, but direct quotation.

By this time, a generation of critics have grown up, of whom I am one, to whom the contention that biographical material is irrelevant to the "essential experience" of a poem has been taught as basic doctrine. The word "experience" is important; it comes out of I. A. Richards at his most scientizing; and along with the "extrinsic-intrinsic" metaphor is a key to the antibiographist point of view. It must be understood for what the word "experience" is

being substituted: as an "experience," a poem is no longer regarded as an "imitation," in any of the received senses of the word; nor even as an "expression" in the Crocean sense; and above all, not as a "communication." All three possible substitute terms imply a necessary interconnectedness between the art object and some *other* area of experience—or at least an essentially intended pointing outward or inward toward some independently existent *otherness*. This is distasteful to the antibiographer, who shows the ordinary nominalist uneasiness at any suggestion that there are realities more comprehensive than particulars, to which words only refer.

An odd phenomenon is the support of a position to which Nominalism is logically necessary, by many confirmed antiscientizers and realists; they are betrayed into their ill-advised fellow-traveling, I think, by an excess of anti-Romanticism. It is no longer as fashionable as it once was to publicly anathematize Shelley and Swinburne, but the bias persists as a real force in current critical practice, and cuts off many, to whom the position would be temperamentally and metaphysically attractive, from Expressionism. What the modern sensibility finds particularly unsympathetic in some Romantic writing has been called, misleadingly I think, "the exploitation of personality"; it is rather a tendency toward the excessively "programmatic." Just as music and painting can be too "literary," so literature itself can be too "literary." In reaction against the programmatic, there are two possible paths, more deeply into and through the personalism of Romanticism to Expressionism, or outward and away toward the sort of "abstraction" achieved in cubist painting.

As a matter of fact, there has been at work all along in our period an underground, and probably harmful, analogy between poetry and the plastic arts. A poem, the feeling has been, should be as "palpable and mute" not merely as an actual fruit, but as the fruit become pure color and texture of Picasso or Matisse. As pictures have become frankly paint, so should poems be frankly words. "A poem should not mean but be." There is the slogan of the movement!

It is a rather nice phrase in the limited context of MacLeish's little poem, but a dangerous full-blown aesthetic position. The no-

tion that a work of art is, or should be, absolutely self-contained, a discrete set of mutually interrelated references, needs only to be stated clearly to seem the *reductio ad absurdum* which it is. Yet this belief in the poem as a closed system, "cut-off" in ideal isolation, descends from the realm of theoretical criticism to practical criticism and classroom pedagogy (if not in practice, at least as an institutionalized hypocrisy) to become the *leitmotif* of the New Teacher: "Stay *inside* the poem!"

New Criticism

The narrative and dramatic poem, finally poetic drama itself, is assimilated to a formulation, even *apparently* applicable only to a lyric of the most absolute purity—and it becomes heretical to treat the work as anything but words, to ask those questions which attest our conviction that the work of art is "real"; that in the poem, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; that certain created actions and characters exist, in some sense, *outside* of their formalizations. How long was Hamlet in Wittenberg? How many children did Lady Macbeth have? In what sense does Prospero speak for Shakespeare? What developing sensibility can be inferred from the Shakespearean corpus and be called (what *else*?) Shakespeare? We cannot ask these questions in the dewy innocence with which they were first posed; we restate them on the second convolution, aware of all the arguments against them, and the more convinced that they are essential, and cannot be shelved any more than can those questions about the ends and origins of existence which have also been recently declared "unreal."

Closely associated with the Richardsian experiential-semantic approach in the total position of the antibiographer, is the psychological notion of the poem as an "objective correlative" or a complex of "objective correlatives" of the poet's emotional responses to the given world. Mr. Eliot's term is as elusive as it is appealing; but I am concerned here (Mr. Eliseo Vivas has elsewhere discussed from the "intrinsicist" point of view other of its difficulties) only with the adjective "objective" in one of its possible implications. Whatever its origins, Mr. Eliot seems to be asserting, a poem succeeds, as a poem, in so far as it is detached from the subjectivity of its maker. The poem is achieved by a process of objectification, and can be legitimately examined and understood

only as an "object." This formulation leaves a somewhat second-best use for the biographical approach, as a way of explaining the particular badness of certain kinds of bad poems, e.g., Romantic verse and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

From this presumed insight follows the deprivation of the poet's right to explain his own poem, or at least the challenging of his claim to speak with final authority about his own work. Once realized, the argument runs, a successful poem is detached; and the author no longer has any property rights in what now belongs to the tradition rather than to him. If, benightedly, he protests against some critical analysis or interpretation which seems to him wrong on the basis of his special biographical knowledge, he reveals that either his poem is not truly "successful," or even worse, that he has never read "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

There are, in fact, two quite different contentions, one valid, one invalid, confused in most statements about the poet as commentator on his own work. First it is asserted (and with real truth) that a poem may contain more meanings than the maker is ever aware of; and second (this is false, of course) that nothing the poet can tell us about his own work is of any *decisive* importance, because the poet cannot help falling into the trap of talking about his "intentions." But the notion of "intention" implies the belief that there is a somehow pre-existent something against which the achieved work of art can be measured; and although this has been for all recorded time the point of view of the practicing writer, every graduate student who has read Wimsatt and Beardsley on the Intentional Fallacy knows that we are all now to believe that there is no other poem except the poem of "words."

The fact that all recognized critics have consistently spoken of intention shows merely that in the unfortunate past the writer about literature has often (unfortunately!) spoken more like the poet than the scientific semanticist. This regrettable looseness of expression, it can only be hoped, will be amended in the future, now that we have been duly warned. It is difficult not to be tempted by analogy. Why, we want to ask, can we properly laugh at the visiting dignitary in the high hat when he slips on the steps to the platform, because of the disparity between the entrance he *intended*

and the one he achieved; and still not speak of a bathetic disparity between what a poem obviously aims at and what it does? On what respectable grounds can it be maintained that a poem is all act and no potentiality?

It is difficult to understand the success of the antibiographist tendency in more respectable critical circles and in the schools, in light of its own internal contradictions. The explanation lies, I suppose, in its comparative newness, and in the failure of its opponents to arrive at any *coherent* theory of the relationship between the life of the poet and his work; so long as biographers are content merely to place side by side undigested biographical data and uninspired paraphrases of poems—linking them together mechanically or pseudogenetically: “Wordsworth lived in the country and therefore wrote Nature poetry”; or even worse, so long as notes proving that Milton was born in one house rather than another continue to be printed in magazines devoted to the study of literature, people will be tempted into opposite though equal idiocies, which have at least not been for so long proved utterly bankrupt.

A recent phenomenon of some interest in this regard is the astonishing popularity of such texts as Thomas and Brown’s classroom anthology called *Reading Poems*—. The very title reveals the dogma behind the book; in a world of discrete individual “experiences,” of “close-reading” (a cant phrase of the antibiographist) as an ideal, one cannot even talk of so large an abstraction as poetry. It is only “poems” to which the student must be exposed, poems printed out of chronological order and without the names of the authors attached, lest the young reader be led astray by what (necessarily irrelevant) information he may have concerning the biography or social background of any of the poets. It is all something of a hoax, of course; the teacher realizes that the chances of any student knowing too much for his own good about such matters are slight indeed; and besides, there is an index in which the names of the poets are revealed, so that unless one is *very* virtuous, he can scarcely help looking them up. In addition, the good teacher is himself aware to begin with of the contexts, social and biographical, of a large number of the pieces. Frankly, that is why they

make sense to him; and even when he admonishes the young to "stay *inside*" the poems, he is bootlegging from "outside" all kinds of rich relevancies, which he possesses because he is capable of *connecting*.

I cannot help feeling that the chief problem of teaching anything in our atomized period lies precisely in the fact that the ordinary student cannot or will not connect the few facts he knows, the slim insights he has previously attained, the chance extensions of sensibility into which he has been once or twice tempted, into a large enough context to make sense of the world he inhabits, or the works of art he encounters. It is because the old-line biographer fails to connect his facts with the works they presumably illuminate, and not because he does connect them that he is a poor critic. And the doctrinaire antibiographer, like the doctrinaire biographer before him, secure in pride and ignorance of the newer psychologies, makes worse the endemic disease of our era—the failure to connect. There is no "work itself," no independent formal entity which is its own sole context; the poem is the sum total of many contexts, all of which must be known to know it and evaluate it. "Only connect!" should be the motto of all critics and teachers—and the connective link between the poem on the page and most of its rewarding contexts is precisely—biography.

The poet's life is the focusing glass through which pass the determinants of the shape of his work: the tradition available to him, his understanding of "kinds," the impact of special experiences (travel, love, etc.). But the poet's life is more than a burning glass; with his work, it makes up his total meaning. I do not intend to say, of course, that some meanings of works of art, satisfactory and as far as they go sufficient, are not available in the single work itself (only a really *bad* work depends for all substantial meaning on a knowledge of the life-style of its author); but a whole body of work will contain larger meanings, and, where it is available, a sense of the life of the writer will raise that meaning to a still higher power. The latter two kinds of meaning fade into each other; for as soon as two works by a single author are considered side by side, one has begun to deal with biography, that is with

an interconnectedness, fully explicable only in terms of a personality, inferred or discovered.

One of the essential functions of the poet is the assertion and creation of a personality, in a profounder sense than any nonartist can attain. We ask of the poet a definition of man, at once particular and abstract, stated and acted out. It is impossible to draw a line between the work the poet writes and the work he lives, between the life he lives, and the life he writes. And the agile critic, therefore, must be prepared to move constantly back and forth between life and poem, not in a pointless circle, but in a meaningful spiraling toward the absolute point.

To pursue this matter further, we will have to abandon at this point the nominalist notion of the poem as "words" or "only words." We have the best of excuses; such terminology gets in the way of truth. We will not, however, return to the older notions of the poem as a "document" or the embodiment of an "idea," for these older views are, like the "intrinsicist" position, inimical to the concept of the "marvelous"; and they have the further difficulty of raising political and moral criteria of "truth" as relevant to works of art. To redeem the sense of what words are all the time pointing to and what cannot be adequately explained by syntactical analysis or semantics, I shall speak of the poem as *Archetype* and *Signature*, suggesting that the key to analysis is *symbolics*; and I shall not forget that the poet's life is also capable of being analyzed in those terms. We have been rather ridiculously overemphasizing *medium* as a differentiating factor; I take it that we can now safely assume no one will confuse a life with a poem, and dwell on the elements common to the two, remembering that a pattern of social behavior can be quite as much a symbol as a word, chanted or spoken or printed. In deed as in word, the poet composes himself as maker and mask, in accordance with some contemporaneous *mythos* of the artist. And as we all know, in our day, it is even possible to be a writer without having written anything! When we talk therefore of the importance of the biography of the poet, we do not mean the importance of every trivial detail, but of all that goes into making his particular life style, whether he concentrate

on re-creating himself, like Shelley, in some obvious image of the Poet, or, like Wallace Stevens, in some witty antimask of the Poet. Who could contend that even the *faces* of Shelley and Stevens are not typical products of their quite different kinds of art!

✓ The word Archetype is the more familiar of my terms; I use it instead of the word "myth," which I have employed in the past but which becomes increasingly ambiguous, to mean any of the immemorial patterns of response to the human situation in its most permanent aspects: death, love, the biological family, the relationship with the Unknown, etc., whether those patterns be considered to reside in the Jungian Collective Unconscious or the Platonic world of Ideas. The archetypal belongs to the infra- or meta-personal, to what Freudians call the Id or the Unconscious; that is, it belongs to the Community at its deepest, preconscious levels of acceptance.

I use Signature to mean the sum total of individuating factors in a work, the sign of the Persona or Personality, through which an Archetype is rendered, and which itself tends to become a subject as well as a means of the poem. Literature, properly speaking, can be said to come into existence at the moment a Signature is imposed upon the Archetype. The purely archetypal, without signature elements, is the Myth. Perhaps a pair of examples are in order (with thanks to Mr. C. S. Lewis). The story of Balder the Beautiful and Shakespeare's *Tempest* deal with somewhat similar archetypal material of immersion and resurrection; but we recall the *Tempest* only in all its specificity: the diction, meter, patterns of imagery, the heard voice of Shakespeare (the Signature as Means); as well as the scarcely motivated speech on premarital chastity, the breaking of the fictional frame by the unconventional religious *plaudite* (the Signature as Subject). Without these elements, the *Tempest* is simply not the *Tempest*; but Balder can be retold in any diction, any style, just so long as faith is kept with the bare -plot—and it is itself, for it is pure myth. Other examples are provided by certain children's stories, retold and reillustrated without losing their essential identity, whether they be "folk" creations like *Cinderella*, or art products, "captured" by the folk imagination, like Southey's *Three Bears*.

In our own time, we have seen the arts (first music, then painting, last of all literature) attempting to become "pure," or "abstract," that is to say, attempting to slough off all remnants of the Archetypal in a drive toward becoming unadulterated Signature. It should be noticed that the *theory* of abstract art is completely misleading in this regard, speaking as it does about pure forms, and mathematics, and the disavowal of personality. The abstract painter, for instance, does not, as he sometimes claims, really "paint paint," but signs his name. So-called abstract art is the ultimate expression of personality; so that the spectator says of a contemporary painting not what one would have said in the anonymous Middle Ages, "There's a *Tree of Jesse* or a *Crucifixion*!" or not even what is said of Renaissance art, "There's a Michel Angelo *Lost Judgment* or a Raphael *Madonna*!" but quite simply, "There's a Mondrian or a Jackson Pollock!" Analogously, in literature we recognize a poem immediately as "a Marianne Moore" or "an Ezra Pound" long before we understand, if ever, any of its essential meanings.

The theory of "realism" or "naturalism" denies both the Archetype and the Signature, advocating, in its extreme forms, that art merely "describes nature or reality" in a neutral style based on the case report of the scientist. Art which really achieves such aims becomes, of course, something less than "poetry" as I have used the term here, turning into an "imitation" in the lowest Platonic sense, "thrice removed from the truth." Fortunately, the greatest "realists" consistently betray their principles, creating Archetypes and symbols willy-nilly, and setting them in a Signature distinguished by what James called "solidity of specification." The chief value of "realism" as a theory is that it helps create in the more sophisticated writer a kind of blessed stupidity in regard to what he is really doing, so that the archetypal material can well up into his work uninhibited by his intent; and in a complementary way, it makes acceptance of that archetypal material possible for an audience which thinks of itself as "science-minded" and inimical to the demonic and mythic. It constantly startles and pleases me to come across references to such creators of grotesque Archetypes as Dostoevsky and Dickens and Faulkner as "realists."

A pair of *caveats* are necessary, before we proceed. The distinction between Archetype and Signature, it should be noted, does not correspond to the ancient dichotomy of Content and Form. Such "forms" as the structures of Greek Tragedy (cf. Gilbert Murray), New Comedy and Pastoral Elegy are themselves *versunkene* Archetypes, capable of being re-realized in the great work of art. (Elsewhere I have called these "structural myths.")

Nor does the present distinction cut quite the same way as that between "impersonal" (or even "nonpersonal") and "personal." —For the Signature, which is rooted in the Ego and Superego, belongs, as the twofold Freudian division implies, to the social collectivity as well as to the individual writer. The Signature is the joint product of "rules" and "conventions," of the expectations of a community, and the idiosyncratic responses of the individual poet, who adds a personal idiom or voice to a received style. The difference between the communal element in the Signature and that in the Archetype is that the former is *conscious*, that is, associated with the Superego rather than the Id. The relevant, archetypal metaphor for this situation would make the personal element the Son, the conscious-communal the Father, and the unconscious-communal the Mother (or the Sister, an image which occurs often as a symbolic euphemism for the Mother)—in the biological Trinity.

It is not irrelevant that the Romantic Movement, which combined a deliberate return to the Archetypal with a contempt for the conscious-communal elements in the Signature, made one of the *leitmotifs* of the lives of its poets, as well as of their poems, the flight of the Sister from the threat of rape by the Father (Shelley's *Cenci*, for instance) and the complementary desperate love of Brother and Sister (anywhere from Chateaubriand and Wordsworth to Byron and Melville).

Even the most orthodox antibiographist is prepared to grant the importance of biographical information in the *understanding* of certain Ego elements in the Signature—this is what the intrinsicist calls the study of an author's "idiosyncratic use of words." But he would deny vehemently the possibility of using biographical material for the purposes of *evaluation*. Let us consider some exam-

ples. For instance, the line in one of John Donne's poems, "A Hymne to God the Father," which runs, "When thou hast done, thou hast not done . . ." would be incomprehensible in such a collection without author's names as the Thomas and Brown *Reading Poems*. Without the minimum biographical datum of the name of the poet, the reader could not realize that a pun was involved, and consequently could not even ask himself the evaluative question most important to the poem, namely, what is the value of the pun in a serious, even a religious, piece of verse? This is the simplest use of biography, referring us for only an instant outside of the poem, and letting us remain within it, once we have returned with the information. Similar examples are plentiful in Shakespeare's sonnets: the references to his own first name, for instance, or the troublesome phrase "all *hewes* in his controlling."

A second example which looks much like the first at a superficial glance, but which opens up in quite a different way, would be the verse "they're but *Mummy* posset," from Donne's "Love's Alchemie." Let us consider whether we can sustain the contention that there is a pun on *Mummy*, whether deliberately planned or unconsciously fallen into. Can we read the line as having the two meanings: women, so fair in the desiring, turn out to be only dried-out corpses after the having; and women, once possessed, turn out to be substitutes for the Mother, who is the real end of our desiring? An analysis of the mere *word* does not take us very far; we discover that the *lallwort* "mummy" meaning mother is not recorded until 1830 in that precise spelling, but that there are attested uses of it in the form "mammy" (we remember, perhaps, that "mammy-apple" and "mummy-apple" are interchangeable forms meaning papaya) well back into Donne's period, and the related form *mome* goes back into Middle English. Inevitably, such evidence is inconclusive, establishing possibilities at best, and never really bearing on the question of probability, for which we must turn to life itself, to Donne's actual relations with his mother; and beyond that to the science of such relationships.

When we have discovered that John Donne did, indeed, live in an especially intimate relationship with his mother throughout her long life (she actually outlived her son); and when we have

set the possible pun in a context of other literary uses of a mythic situation in which the long-desired possessed turns at the moment of possession into a shriveled hag who is also a mother (Rider Haggard's *She*, Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, and, most explicitly, Flaubert's *Education Sentimentale*), we realize that our original contention is highly probable, that the pun embodies a traditional version of what the psychologists have taught us to call the Oedipus Archetype. It should be noticed in passing, that the archetypal critic is delivered from the bondage of time, speaking of "confluences" rather than "influences," and finding the explication of a given work in things written later as well as earlier than the original piece. Following the lead opened up by "*Mummy possest*," we can move still further toward an understanding of Donne, continuing to shuttle between life and work with our new clue, and examining, for instance, Donne's ambivalent relations to the greater Mother, the Roman Church, which his actual mother represented not only metaphorically, but in her own allegiance and descent. This sort of analysis which at once unifies and opens up (one could do something equally provocative and rich, for instance, with the fact that in two of Melville's tales, ships symbolic of innocence are called *The Jolly Bachelor* and *The Bachelor's Delight*) is condemned in some quarters as "failing to stay close to the actual meaning of the work itself"—as if the work were a penny peep show to which one must screw his eye, instead of a focus opening on an inexhaustible totality.

The "intrinsicist" is completely unnerved by any reference to the role of the Archetype in literature, fearing such references as strategies to restore the criterion of the "marvelous" to respectable currency as a standard of literary excellence; for not only is the notion of the "marvelous" prescientific, but it is annoyingly immune to "close analysis." Certainly, the contemplation of the Archetype pushes the critic beyond semantics, and beyond the kind of analysis that considers it has done all when it assures us (once again!) that the parts and whole of a poem cohere. The critic in pursuit of the archetype finds himself involved in anthropology and depth psychology (not because these are New Gospels, but because they provide useful tools); and if he is not too embarrassed in such

company to look about him, he discovers that he has come upon a way of binding together our fractured world, of uniting literature and nonliterature *without the reduction of the poem*.

It is sometimes objected that though the archetypal critic can move convincingly between worlds ordinarily cut off from each other, he sacrifices for this privilege the ability to distinguish the essential qualities of literary works, and especially that of evaluating them. Far from being irrelevant to evaluation, the consideration of the archetypal content of works of art is essential to it! One of the earlier critics of Dante says somewhere that poetry, as distinguished from rhetoric (which treats of the credible as credible), treats of the "marvelous" as credible. Much contemporary criticism has cut itself off from this insight, that is, from the realization of what poetry on its deepest levels *is*. It is just as ridiculous to attempt the evaluation of a work of art in *purely* formal terms (considering only the Signature as Means), as it would be to evaluate it *purely* in terms of the "marvelous," or the Archetypal. The question, for instance, of whether *Mona Lisa* is just a *bourgeoise* or whether she "as Leda, was the Mother of Helen of Troy, and, as St. Anne, was the mother of Mary" is just as vital to a final estimate of the picture's worth as any matter of control of the medium or handling of light and shadow.

The Romantics seem to have realized this, and to have reached in their distinction between Fancy and Imagination for rubrics to distinguish between the poetic method that touches the Archetypal deeply and that which merely skirts it. Even the Arnoldian description of Pope as "a classic of our prose," right or wrong, was feeling toward a similar standard of discrimination. It is typical and ironic, that Arnold in a moralizing age should have felt obliged to call the demonic power of evoking the Archetype "High Seriousness." Certainly, the complete abandonment of any such criterion by the intrinsicist leaves him baffled before certain strong mythopoeic talents like Dickens or Stevenson; and it is the same lack in his system which prevents his understanding of the complementary relationship of the life and work of the poet.

2

The Archetype which makes literature itself possible in the first instance is the Archetype of the Poet. At the moment when myth is uncertainly becoming literature, that is, reaching tentatively toward a Signature, the poet is conceived of passively, as a mere vehicle. It is the Muse who is mythically bodied forth, the unconscious collective source of the Archetypes, imagined as more than human, and, of course, *female*. The Poet is still conceived more as Persona than Personality; the few characteristics with which he is endowed are borrowed from the prophet: he is a blind old man, impotent in his own right. That blindness (impotence as power, what Keats much later would call "negative capability") is the earliest version of the blessing-curse, without which the popular mind cannot conceive of the poet. His flaw is, in the early stages, at once the result and the precondition of his submitting himself to the dark powers of inspiration for the sake of the whole people.

But very soon, the poet begins to assume a more individualized life-style, the lived Signature imposed on the Archetype, and we have no longer the featureless poet born in seven cities, his face a Mask through which a voice not his is heard, but Aeschylus, the Athenian citizen-poet; Sophocles, the spoiled darling of fate; or Euripides, the crowd-contemner in his Grotto. The mass-mind, dimly resentful as the *Vates* becomes *Poeta*, the Seer a Maker, the Persona a Personality, composes a new Archetype, an image to punish the poet for detaching himself from the collective Id—and the Poet, amused and baffled, accepts and elaborates the new image. The legend asserts that Euripides (the first completely self-conscious alienated artist?) died torn to pieces by dogs, or even more to the point, by *women*. And behind the late personalized application looms the more ancient *mythos* of the ritually dismembered Orpheus, ripped by the Maenads when he had withdrawn for lonely contemplation. The older myth suggests that a sacrifice is involved as well as a punishment—the casting out and rending of the poet being reinterpreted as a death suffered for the group, by one who has dared make the first forays out of collec-

tivity toward personality, and has endured the consequent revenge of the group as devotees of the unconscious.

In light of this, it is no longer possible to think of the *poète maudit* as an unfortunate invention of the Romantics, or of the Alienated Artist as a by-product of mass communications. These are reinventions, as our archetypal history repeats itself under the influence of the breakdown of Christianity. Our newer names name only recent exacerbations of a situation as old as literature itself, which in turn is coeval with the rise of personality. Only the conventional stigmata of the poet as Scape-Hero have changed with time: the Blind Man becomes the disreputable Player, the Atheist, the Incestuous lover, the Homosexual, or (especially in America) the Drunkard; though, indeed, none of the older versions ever die, even the Homer-typus reasserting itself in Milton and James Joyce. Perhaps in recent times, the poet has come to collaborate somewhat more enthusiastically in his own defamation and destruction, whether by drowning or tuberculosis or dissipation—or by a token suicide in the work (cf. Werther). And he helps ever more consciously to compose himself and his fellow poets—Byron, for instance, the poet *par excellence* of the mid-nineteenth century, being the joint product of Byron and Goethe—and, though most of us forget, Harriet Beecher Stowe! Some dramatic version of the poet seems necessary to every age and the people do not care whether the poet creates himself in his life or work or both. One thinks right now of F. Scott Fitzgerald, of course, our popular image of the artist.

The critic, on the other hand, is likely to become impatient with the lay indifference to the poetizing of life, and the “biographizing” of poetry; for he proceeds on the false assumption that the poet’s life is primarily “given” and only illegitimately “made,” while his work is essentially “made” and scarcely “given” at all. This is the source of endless confusion.

In perhaps the greatest periods of world literature, the “given” element in poetry is made clear by the custom of supplying, or more precisely, of *imposing* on the poet certain traditional bodies of story. The poet in such periods can think of himself only as “working with” materials belonging to the whole community,

emending by a dozen or sixteen the inherited plot. Greek myths, the fairy tales and *novelle* of the Elizabethans, the Christian body of legend available to Dante, are examples of such material. (In our world a traditionally restricted body of story is found only in sub-art: the pulp Western, or the movie Horse opera.) In such situations, Archetype and "story" are synonymous; one remembers that for Aristotle, *mythos* was the word for "plot," and plot was, he insisted, the most important element in tragedy. That Aristotle makes his assertions on rationalistic grounds, with no apparent awareness of the importance of the Archetype as such, does not matter; it does not even matter whether the poet himself is aware of the implications of his material. As long as he works with such an inherited gift, he can provide the ritual satisfaction necessary to great art without self-consciousness.

A Shakespeare, a Dante, or a Sophocles, coming at a moment when the Archetypes of a period are still understood as "given," and yet are not considered too "sacred" for rendering through the individual Signature, possess immense initial advantages over the poet who comes earlier or later in the process. But the great poet is not simply the mechanical result of such an occasion; he must be able to rise to it, to be capable (like Shakespeare) of at once realizing utterly the archetypal implications of his material, and of formally embodying it in a lucid and unmistakable Signature. But the balance is delicate and incapable of being long maintained. The brief history of Athenian tragedy provides the classic instance. After the successes of Sophocles come the attempts of Euripides; and in Euripides one begins to feel the encounter of Signature and Archetype as a *conflict*—the poet and the collectivity have begun to lose touch with each other and with their common preconscious sources of value and behavior. Euripides seems to feel his inherited material as a burden, tucking it away in prologue and epilogue, so that he can get on with his proper business—the imitation of particulars. The poem begins to come apart; the acute critic finds it, however "tragic," sloppy, technically inept; and the audience raises the familiar cry of "incomprehensible and blasphemous!" Even the poet himself begins to distrust his own im-

pulses, and writes, as Euripides did in his *Bacchae*, a mythic criticism of his own sacrilege.

After the Euripidean crisis, the Archetypes survive only in fallen form: as inherited and scarcely understood structures (the seeds of the *genres* which are structural Archetypes become structural platitudes); as type characters, less complex than the masks that indicate them; as "popular" stock plots. The "Happy Ending" arises as a kind of *ersatz* of the true reconciliation of society and individual in Sophoclean tragedy; and the audience which can no longer find essential reassurance in its poetry that the Superego and the Id can live at peace with each other, content themselves with the demonstration that at least Jack has his Jill, despite the comic opposition of the Old Man. Still later, even the tension of Euripidean tragedy and New Comedy is lost, and the Archetype comes to be disregarded completely; poetry becomes either utterly "realistic," rendering the struggle between Ego and Superego in terms of the imitation of particulars; or it strives to be "pure" in the contemporary sense, that is, to make the Signature its sole subject as well as its means.

Can the Archetype be redeemed after such a fall? There are various possibilities (short of the emergence of a new ordered myth system): the writer can, like Graham Greene or Robert Penn Warren, capture for serious purposes—that is, re-render through complex and subtle Signatures—debased "popular" Archetypes; the thriller, the detective story, the western or science fiction; or the poet can ironically manipulate the shreds and patches of out-lived mythologies, fragments shored against our ruins. Eliot, Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Thomas Mann have all made attempts of the latter sort, writing finally not archetypal poetry, but poetry *about* archetypes, in which plot (anciently *mythos* itself) founders under the burden of overt explication, or disappears completely. Or the poet can, like Blake or Yeats or Hart Crane, invent a private myth system of his own. Neither of the last two expedients can reach the popular audience, which prefers its archetypes rendered without self-consciousness of so intrusive a sort.

A final way back into the world of the Archetypes, available

even in our atomized culture, is an extension of the way instinctively sought by the Romantics, down through the personality of the poet, past his particular foibles and eccentricities, to his unconscious core, where he becomes one with us all in the presence of our ancient Gods, the protagonists of fables we think we no longer believe. In fantasy and terror, we can return to our common source. It is a process to delight a Hegelian, the triple swing from a naïve communal to the personal to a sophisticated communal.

We must be aware of the differences between the thesis and synthesis of our series. What cannot be recreated as Plot becomes reborn as Character—ultimately the character of the poet (what else is available to him?), whether directly or in projection. In the Mask of his life and the manifold masks of his work, the poet expresses for a whole society the ritual meaning of its inarticulate selves; the artist goes forth not to “re-create the conscience of his race,” but to redeem its unconscious. We cannot get back into the primal Garden of the unfallen Archetypes, but we can yield ourselves to the dreams and images that mean paradise regained. For the critic who cannot only yield, but must also *understand*, there are available new methods of exploration. To understand the Archetypes of Athenian drama, he needs (above and beyond semantics) anthropology; to understand those of recent poetry, he needs (beyond “close analysis”) depth analysis, as defined by Freud and, particularly, by Jung.

The biographical approach, tempered by such findings, is just now coming into its own. We are achieving new ways of connecting (or more precisely, of understanding a connection which has always existed) the Poet and the poem, the lived and the made, the Signature and the Archetype. It is in the focus of the poetic personality that *Dichtung* and *Wahreit* become one; and it is incumbent upon us, without surrendering our right to make useful distinctions, to seize the principle of that unity. “Only connect!”

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

Maude Bodkin and Psychological Criticism

IT IS MAUD BODKIN'S distinction to have made what is probably the best use to date of psychoanalysis in literary criticism. Her book *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, subtitled *Psychological Studies of Imagination*, was published by Oxford in England in 1934 and attracted almost no attention whatsoever. It was reviewed in a handful of periodicals, getting what enthusiastic comment it got in magazines devoted to folklore and psychology and receiving rather condescending treatment from the general literary press. It has had no appreciable influence on any English criticism I have encountered (although Knight, Day Lewis, and Auden have acknowledged it, and Leavis has attacked it in *Scrutiny*). In this country Miss Bodkin is even less known. She has never, to my knowledge, been reviewed or discussed in an American periodical. (Again, a few critics, among them Burke and Warren, have managed to discover and utilize her work.) She is not listed in any American or British work of reference I have ever managed to find in a library, including *Who's Who*, and she seems never to have published in any periodical other than *Mind* and the *British Journal of Psychology* (and, if she is the A. M. Bodkin

she cites in a footnote, the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*) until the war, when she contributed one essay to the *Wind and the Rain*, a new English review with a religious and moral emphasis.

There are a number of reasons for this obscurity. First, Miss Bodkin is not a professional psychoanalyst, which would have lent her work professional authority, nor does she seem to be a professional critic. She is apparently an amateur student of literature (at one time she was a publisher's reader) who happens to have a wide acquaintance with both psychology and imaginative literature, as well as genuine literary sensitivity, sense of proportion, and taste that effectively keep her from all the familiar excesses of psychoanalytic criticism. As far as I have been able to learn, Miss Bodkin became interested in the literary possibilities of psychoanalysis in middle age, and attended a group of seminars for lay students held by Dr. Carl G. Jung in Zurich in the twenties on his analytical psychology and some of its implications. Her work is chiefly dependent on Jungian theories and insights, although it is obviously her own, and it is unlikely that Dr. Jung is familiar with it and questionable whether he would approve of it if he were.

I am not competent to discuss the ideas of Dr. Jung (or any psychologist) technically, but a brief summary of those which apply to art is essential for any consideration of Miss Bodkin's work. The most important of them from a literary viewpoint is the concept of "archetypes." Jung defines these most fully in the article "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art" in *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*. They are unconscious primordial images, the "psychic residua of numberless experiences of the same type" shared by ancestors going back to primitive times, which are somehow inherited in the structure of the brain. They are thus basic, age-old patterns of central human experience, and Jung's hypothesis, which Miss Bodkin devoted her book to investigating, is that these archetypes lie at the root of any poetry (or any other art) possessing special emotional significance.

For Jung, these archetypal patterns exist all along the chain of communication: as configurations in the poet's unconscious, as recurring themes or image sequences in poetry, and as configurations in the reader's or audience's unconscious. This is based on

the concept of a "collective unconscious" bearing the racial past, which generated mythic heroes for the primitive and still generates similar individual fantasies for the civilized man, and which finds its chief expression in a relatively familiar and timeless symbolism, endlessly recurring. (It should be obvious how close this idea is to cyclic theories of history like Vico's, as well as to Stekel's modification of Freud's free and experiential dream symbolism in favor of a fixed, gypsy-dream-book symbolism, and how captivating it would be to a writer like Joyce, already influenced by Vico, seeking a psychology he could use in creating H. C. Everybody.)

For Jung, the artist as well as the neurotic reproduces in detail the myths derived from the ritual experience of primitive man, sometimes consciously, sometimes by a "visionary" process. The artist, however, is *not* a neurotic; is, in fact, as artist, of far greater significance than the neurotic. In his article "Psychology and Poetry" in *transition*, Jung dignifies the poet as "the collective *man*, the carrier and former of the unconsciously active soul of mankind." With this goes the idea that in the last analysis art is an autonomous complex of whose origin we know nothing, an expression baffling the ingenuity of science, and that all psychoanalysis can do is study the antecedent materials and describe the creative process without explaining it.¹

Jung's other concepts—his primary quarrel with Freud over "libido," which he defines as "psychic instinctive energy in general," a kind of Bergsonian *élan vital*, rather than simply "sexual energy"; his basic personality types, introvert and extravert, the results of inward and outward turning of the libido; and his other terms like "anima," the ideal or soul-image, and "persona," the complementary outer character—are of less significance in Miss Bodkin's work and to literary criticism in general. For literary analysis, as she recognized, the basic concepts are the collective unconscious and its archetypal patterns.

In a number of respects Jung's analytical psychology might seem to be more fruitful for literary criticism than Freudian psychoanalysis. Miss Bodkin has expressed two of its advantages as she sees them:

Freud's terminology cannot do justice to it (the interaction between the individual mind and the social heritage in a poem) because the postulates within which he works require that later and higher products of the life process be explained in terms of elements present in the beginning. Also, the concentration of Freudian writers upon the physical relation of parent and child cuts off that other equally valid viewpoint, from which the parent's magic for the child, and overpowering influence, appear due to his acting as the first channel of the wider influence of the community and its stored achievement.

The major advantage over Freud, however, that Jungian psychology has in terms of literary criticism is that, unlike Jung, Freud *did* at one time tend to see art largely as a neurotic expression, specifically the product of a narcissistic stage of development, a fantasy wish-fulfillment or substitute gratification resulting from unsatisfied longings in the real world. He writes typically in *Civilization and Its Discontents* of "beauty": "Its derivation from the realms of sexual sensation is all that seems certain; the love of beauty is a perfect example of a feeling with an inhibited aim," which is not mitigated by the admission that psychoanalysis "has less to say about beauty than about most other things."

Nevertheless, it is Freud, rather than any of his dissenting disciples, who has tremendously influenced almost every modern writer and critic. Adler has had relatively little literary influence, aside from the ubiquitous term "inferiority complex" (although it should be admitted that almost every contemporary novel that has been concerned with ego or power drives or compensations, from *The Great Gatsby* to *What Makes Sammy Run* has unwittingly absorbed something of Adler's individual psychology).² Outside of Zurich, where Joyce came somewhat under Jung's influence, even Jung has had few literary followers, chiefly Eugene Jolas and the *transition* crowd in Paris for a brief period, and a group of Socialist poets and critics around James Oppenheim in this country.³ Stekel, Rank, and the other Freudian dissenters have been even less important outside their own fields.

The collective and affirmative nature of Jung's psychology is its greatest advantage for literary criticism, but it also constitutes its greatest danger, a tendency to turn into a glorification of irrational-

ity, mysticism, and "racial memory," the sort of thing that made Jung so attractive to Nazi and Fascist thinkers. Miss Bodkin has largely avoided this pitfall in Jung's thoughts, but at least once in the book she calls for the continual endeavor to render underlying psychological patterns "in terms of feeling rather than intellect" with the same ambiguous possibility of glorifying irrationality that has endeared Jung to the blood-and-soil contingent. For the most part, though, she uses the scientific-analytic aspects of Jung's work rather than the metaphysical-mystic, and it is significant that her epigraph for *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* should be Jung at his least world-shaking and most honestly humble:

Philosophical criticism has helped me to see that every psychology—my own included—has the character of a subjective confession . . . it is only by accepting this as inevitable that I can serve the cause of man's knowledge of man.

2

Archetypal Patterns in Poetry is one of the few books that performs precisely the action its title denotes; it discusses archetypal patterns in poetry. The book consists of six chapters, the first raising the general problem of archetypes as illustrated by tragic drama, and discussing Ernest Jones's exploration of the Oedipus complex in *Hamlet*; the other five dealing respectively with the rebirth archetype in *The Ancient Mariner*; the heaven-hell archetype in Coleridge, Milton, and Dante; some archetypal women in poetry; the archetypal devil, hero, and god; and some archetypes in contemporary literature. Methodologically her work divides into two sorts: the detailed exploration of an archetype in a single work, like rebirth in *The Ancient Mariner*; and the comparison of variants of an archetype in a number of works, like the chapter on the archetypal women of great poets. Both methods warrant examination.

In *The Ancient Mariner* Miss Bodkin begins by noting the passages describing the becalming of the ship and its later miraculous motion and finds that they introduce the problem of death and

rebirth in a specific symbolization of Coleridge's experience of futile mental effort followed by a sudden creative inspiration. For this reading she relies, first on her own associations and memories inspired by the lines, then on available records of Coleridge's private associations, and finally on the general relationship, illustrated by Biblical quotations, between the rising of the wind and the quickening of the human spirit. Then Miss Bodkin goes on to consider the climax of the poem, the blessing of the snakes and its consequence, which she relates to Jung's archetypal myth of "the night journey under the sea" as illustrated by the Jonah story—the basic Rebirth ritual, organized around guilt and expiation. Here her method includes her own associations and dreams again, Lowes's exploration of Coleridge's sources, Baudouin's analysis of similar imagery in Verhaeren, Hamlet's predicament, other types of the "guilt-haunted wanderer" like Cain and the Wandering Jew, and the general problem of the craving for death or re-entry into the womb, as reflected in dreams, poetry, and psychoanalytic theory. When she concludes, she not only has used the poem to illustrate her archetypal pattern, but has made the pattern illuminate the poem and its effects, fix it in the corpus of major poetry, and greatly heighten and inform enjoyment.

Miss Bodkin's comparative method operates in a similar fashion. In the chapter on the archetypal image of woman, she considers Milton's muse-mother in *Paradise Lost*, relates it to the goddess-mothers in Homer, and identifies them both with the wife-mother mourning for Tammuz and the other slain vegetation gods. She then takes up the ambiguous balance, in Milton's Eve, of Proserpine, the figure of doomed youth, and Delilah, the betrayer; finds the same ambiguity of betrayed-betrayer in Euripides' Phaedra; notes the idealization of these two archetypes in Dante's Beatrice, the mother-imago, with all their earthly elements gone to make Helen, Dido, Cleopatra, and Francesca (particularly Francesca); observes that Vergil's variants of the archetypes, Eurydice and Dido, bear ambiguously within each both the Beatrice and the Francesca elements; and concludes with these elements as stages in the dramatic development of Goethe's Gretchen, Francesca becoming Beatrice. In dealing with the shifting interrelationship of

these archetypal women, Miss Bodkin is able to discuss their temporal aspects in the differing views of the poets' historical periods, as well as their timelessly archetypal aspect in the central poetic vision.

When Miss Bodkin turns to contemporary literature, finding the Rebirth archetype represented in opposing bodily and spiritual terms by Lawrence's *Plumed Serpent* and Charles Morgan's *The Fountain*, the archetypal poet-figure as a father-imago in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and the phantasmagoric fragments of rebirth rites in Eliot's *Waste Land*, she establishes, although almost as an afterthought, the persistence of these patterns, not only in great literature of the past but as the organizing principle of any serious work of art to our own day.

In noting the persistence of these archetypes, Miss Bodkin tangles willy-nilly with the problem of *how* they are transmitted. If, as Jung (following Freud) claims, they are primal experience somehow recorded in the structure of the brain, then they require a belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics and a demolition of Weismann's monumental hypothesis of the continuity of the germ plasm (whereby germ plasm is never created out of somatic plasm and consequently cannot reproduce its experiential alterations). Freud was prepared to accept this responsibility and, as late as 1939, in *Moses and Monotheism*, affirmed his belief in the inheritance of acquired characteristics despite the views of contemporary biological science. On the other hand, if, as many contemporary psychoanalysts believe, they are inherited not in the physical organism but in the cultural context and are reproduced in each generation by similar infantile experience, then they would alter radically in any society, generation or single child with radically different infantile experience (as Malinowski found the matrilineal Trobrianders had a matrilineal variant of the Oedipus complex). Miss Bodkin attempts to get around this problem by leaving the matter moot, and suggests her reservations toward the Jungian position in the first few pages of the book:

In Jung's formulation of the hypothesis . . . it is asserted that these patterns are . . . "inherited in the structure of the brain"; but of this statement no evidence can be considered here. Jung

believes himself to have evidence of the spontaneous production of ancient patterns in the dreams and fantasies of individuals who had no discoverable access to cultural material in which the patterns were embodied. This evidence is, however, hard to evaluate; especially in view of the way in which certain surprising reproductions, in trance states, of old material, have been subsequently traced to forgotten impressions of sense in the lifetime of the individual.

By page 257, however, she has so far forgotten her reservations as to concede that: "No doubt both an inherited and an individually acquired factor are present" in the superego, the inheritance "that of the tribe throughout the racial past."

Miss Bodkin is saved from the excesses of psychoanalytic criticism by a constant wariness about overemphasizing the psychological factors in poetry. She writes:

Enjoyment of the beauty of poetry is spoiled only if certain of these psycho-physiological echoes are emphasized, as though they were somehow more real than all the other elements with which in a mature mind they are fused—as though these other elements that contribute to the actually experienced response were a mere evasion or disguise of those few primitive elements newly identified by the analyst.

Her psychological factors never cause a poetic effect except "in part." In her central defense of the psychological method, printed as an appendix entitled "Psychological Criticism and Dramatic Conventions," Miss Bodkin answers the objections of E. E. Stoll and others to psychological analysis with the moderate statements that we cannot and should not "cancel the psychological awareness that our own age has conferred on us," that genuine appreciation must be "with the complete resources of our minds," and that psychological insights as well as anything Stoll or other critics can teach us are all valuable components of this enriched apprehension.

One of her most valuable concepts in this judicious use of psychology is Jung's description of the fallacy of "nothing but" thinking, the idea that a poem is "nothing but" an example of some category (a type of thinking now sometimes called "thalamic" from the thalamus, the part of the brain capable of only crude dis-

tinctions). Miss Bodkin insists that poetry, instead of being *nothing but* her psychology, is that *and also* a good many other things.

Unlike the professional psychoanalysts, who rely as much as possible on case histories and clinical records, Miss Bodkin relies chiefly on introspection, analyzing and reporting to the best of her ability her own psychological reactions. "Our analysis is of the experience communicated to ourselves," she writes. She describes the sensations of her own mind on reading poetry, what images she becomes aware of, what significance or tension she feels, what associations are evoked, what reactions of empathy or projection arise, what transitions are made, even what dreams she dreams. She attempted to objectify these introspections, or at least widen their base, only once, in the essay on *The Ancient Mariner*. For this she adapted I. A. Richards' laboratory method, described at length in *Practical Criticism*, of giving poems to readers for their reactions, with the modifications that in her case poem and author were identified and she asked only emotional response, the result of "absorbed musing, or reverie" (Galton's "free association"), rather than evaluative opinion. Although the material obtained resulted in a shrewd series of questions aimed at the reader, she announced regretfully in her preface to the book that she had abandoned the attempt, "since it was not found practicable to secure from those with whom the writer was in touch the prolonged, concentrated effort required." She expressed the conviction, however, that eventually "intensive work on the poetic experience of individuals must replace more extensive methods of research."

In addition to her basic indebtedness to Jung, and modifications of the experimental psychology of Galton and Richards, Miss Bodkin has drawn on almost every available psychology. Her indebtedness to Freud is particularly heavy, and not only in areas where Jung accepts him. She questions Freud's assertion that Oedipal attitudes underly all guilt sense in dreams, but concedes that "some form of failure in relation to the parents" does—to the extent of merging with any other factors that may be operative. She accepts Freud's concept of the superego and attempts to mediate between Freud and Jung as to whether it is primarily the influence of the parents in infancy or of the tribe, proposing a

compromise. She also accepts, sometimes with a degree of reservation, such miscellaneous Freudian concepts, with their implications, as the death instinct or Thanatos principle, the ego and id, the pleasure principle, the father-imago, and items ranging from flight in dreams to the serpent and the apple in the story of the Fall, as varieties of sex symbol.

In addition, Miss Bodkin is indebted to a number of Freud's disciples who have analyzed literature. She acknowledges Ernest Jones's study of *Hamlet* for a good deal of her method, particularly such basic devices in the psychological genesis of literature as dissociation and decomposition. She also uses Charles Baudouin's modified Freudian study of Verhaeren, *Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics*; the Freudian anthropology of Géza Róheim, and others. At the same time, she is able to draw on nonpsychoanalytic psychologies. From Gestalt psychology, through such anthropologists as Goldenweiser, she adopts the term "configuration" for a cultural pattern, and is directly familiar with at least Köhler's work on *The Mentality of Apes*, from which she borrows the concept of an interval of suspension before the resolution of a problem.

Besides her eclectic psychology, Miss Bodkin uses philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, and sociologists, as well as a number of modern literary critics, among them William Empson on ambiguity, G. Wilson Knight's work on *Othello*, and John Livingston Lowes's exhaustive study of Coleridge. (It is ironic that Miss Bodkin, the obvious person to extend Lowes's observations on the sources of Coleridge's images in the only area in which they can bear extension, the psychoanalytic, should resolutely refuse to do so. She is as oblivious as he is, for example, to the obvious sex symbolism of the caverns and mountains in *Kubla Khan*.)

With the aid of this eclectic bundle of theories and concepts, Miss Bodkin has made literary criticism, not pseudoscience. Despite all the apparatus, she is insistently a lover of poetry and a sensitive reader. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* is noteworthy for its brilliant insight into the emotional structure of *King Lear*, its explanation (perhaps the first satisfactory one for our time) of the power Shelley's poetry had on its readers, its sensitive and perceptive analysis of Virginia Woolf's techniques, and much else. To

borrow a distinction from Kenneth Burke, she is primarily interested not in *patterns* in poetry, but in patterns in *poetry*.

3

The psychological criticism of literature, much more than any other critical method here discussed, is a development in our own century, since the science of psychology as an organized body of knowledge began within the lifetime of men now living. Informally, criticism has been psychological from its beginnings, in the sense that any critic has obviously attempted to apply what he knew or believed about the operations of the human mind. With the recognition of the unconscious by Freud just before the turn of the century, psychology acquired a dimension from which it could contribute insights otherwise unobtainable into the origins and structure of works of literature. Of psychological critics before Freud, only a few require mention. The most important of these, of course, is Aristotle, the principal source of both psychology and the psychological criticism of literature. Aristotle's empirical psychology is all through his work, and is the central topic of *De Anima* and of the *Parva Naturalia*, the short physical treatises on memory and reminiscence, on dreams, and on prophesying by dreams. He applied his psychology to poetry in *The Poetics*, answering Plato's psychological fallacy in *The Republic*, that poetry feeds the passions and is thus socially harmful, with the much sounder psychological theory of catharsis, that poetry arouses the passions of pity and terror in a controllable symbolic form and then purges them through its operations. The *Poetics* is almost a textbook in the psychology of art; and such concepts as *hamartia*, the tragic flaw that comes from the hero's imperfect insight into his situation; *peripeteia*, the shock of change; the preference of the probable impossible over the improbable possible; and many others are anticipations of basic psychological truths. For Plato in *Ion* the poet is an inspired madman, a neurotic. For Aristotle he is closer to an inspired psychologist.

Aristotle's psychological insights into art were extended and

developed by later classical writers like Longinus and Horace, but the next major step in psychological criticism came only with Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Coleridge took Aristotle's psychology, as modified by Aquinas, Descartes, Hobbes, and Hartley, none of whom made any significant advances on it, and turned it on poetry. The only thing that kept Coleridge from achieving full-blown psychological criticism was the same thing that had prevented Aristotle, the quantitative and qualitative inadequacy of the psychology. Coleridge actually anticipated the unconscious, referring to "those flights of lawless speculation which, abandoned by *all* distinct consciousness, because transgressing the bounds and purposes of our intellectual faculties, are justly condemned as *transcendent*," but he was so far in advance of his time as to be unable to do anything with the discovery. Other anticipations of modern psychological criticism in the *Biographia* include a proposal for reader experiments similar to those Richards made in our century, a distinction in terms of reader-affect between poetry and science, and an invaluable concept of Imagination (which Richards spent an entire volume, *Coleridge on Imagination*, developing into modern psychological terminology).

A contemporary of Coleridge's who requires mention in this chapter, although nowise near as important, is Charles Lamb. Although Lamb never had a formal psychology, his sister's tragic insanity and his own disturbed mental states made him particularly sensitive to the relationship between psychology and art. In "The Sanity of Genius" he wrote one of the best distinctions between art and neurosis we have, and in "Witches and Other Night-
→ Fears" he actually anticipated Jung's archetypes. He wrote:

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras—dire stories of Celæno and the Harpies—may reproduce themselves in the brain of superstition—but they were there before. They are transcripts, types—the *archetypes are in us, and eternal*.—These terrors—date beyond body—or, without the body, they would have been the same.

4

With the publication of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900, the psychoanalytic criticism of literature began. Freud's contribution has a number of aspects. Perhaps the most important is the body of writing about nonliterary problems, particularly dreams, wit, and neurotic symptoms, that contains principles that can profitably be applied to literature. This includes *The Interpretation of Dreams* itself, with its dream mechanisms like condensation, displacement, secondary elaboration, and splitting that appear to be the basic mechanisms of literary creation, its basic concept of wish-fulfillment, equally applicable to art, and its invaluable explorations into the nature of symbolism; as well as other works like *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* and *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*.

Of next importance, perhaps, are Freud's specific comments on the nature of art and the artist. The earlier ones, in "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming," "Contributions to the Psychology of Love," "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning," and even Lecture 23 of *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, as late as 1920, tend to establish the artist as an infantile neurotic, as discussed above. Later discussions, particularly in *New Introductory Lectures* and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, tend to see through this easy formulation to a recognition of the artist as a neurotic *plus* his art, through which he can understand and alter reality; and in an address at his seventieth birthday celebration Freud refused credit for having discovered the subconscious, claiming that that credit properly belonged to the writers.

The final category of Freud's contribution to psychoanalytic literary criticism is his specific discussions of artists and works of art. These are scattered all through the works in brief comments, some of them very perceptive, like the mention of Hamlet in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (on which Jones based his reading), the analysis of *King Lear*, and the discussion of Greek tragedy in *Totem and Taboo*. He did only three long studies: *Leonardo da Vinci: A Psychosexual Study of Infantile Reminiscence*, an article

on "Dostoevsky and Parricide," and a study of an obscure German novel called *Gradiva* by Wilhelm Jensen. With these three works Freud established both types of analysis with which his followers were to concern themselves: the pathography, or the study of a neurotic or psychotic personality using his works for clues; and actual psychoanalytic literary criticism, or the study of a work of literature using psychoanalytic mechanisms and clinical conjectures as clues.

Leonardo da Vinci is largely pathography (although Freud insists that Leonardo was not in any sense a neurotic). It is an attempt, relying heavily on a remarkable analysis of a fantasy-memory of Leonardo's about a vulture, to reconstruct the artist's biography and psychic development by way of understanding his later sexual and artistic inhibitions. Freud calls his work "a biographical effort," insists that it is tentative, and devotes most of his space to conjecturing infantile roots for what he diagnoses as Leonardo's ideal, or incipient, homosexuality. Freud's only concern with Leonardo's works is to explore them for further evidence of the artist's psychic life, with the reservation that "when one considers what profound transformations an impression of an artist has to experience before it can add its contribution to the work of art, one is obliged to moderate considerably one's expectation of demonstrating something definite." He disregards other aspects of the works and at one place seems to suggest that he has no choice, that "the nature of artistic attainment is psychoanalytically inaccessible to us." Nevertheless, within its own terms, the book is one of Freud's finest works and an almost miraculous reconstruction of the life and mind of a complex artist four hundred years dead.

"Dostoevsky and Parricide" is about halfway between the two, chiefly interested in getting at Dostoevsky's hysterical epilepsy, Oedipal wish for his father's death, and latent homosexuality. Nevertheless, despite his statement that "before the problem of the creative artist, analysis must lay down its arms," Freud is highly appreciative of Dostoevsky's novels as remarkable works of art and very much concerned with contributing what he can to their comprehension, both in their symbolic relationship to the author's neurosis and in their purely formal relations.

Delusion and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's "Gradiva" is pure literary analysis. With the curt "we have not access to the psychic life of the author," Freud renounces any attempt to explore Jensen's complexes or neuroses, and confines himself to interpreting the psychological and dream structure of the book, analyzing its symbolic techniques of condensation and displacement, and in general deepening and strengthening its meaning. His conclusion is that Jensen was generally aware of psychoanalytic truths, not from any knowledge of formal psychoanalysis, but from the exploration of his own psyche. The artist is another kind of psychoanalyst. In fact, Freud's treatment of the book is so delicate and respectful that it is not really Freudian enough, and he misses or ignores a fine Oedipus complex in the hero (and presumably the author) and some first-class sex symbolism having to do with lizard-catching. Part of Freud's respect for the book is obviously that it neatly coincides with psychoanalytic theory, thus to some extent "confirming" it in its early years ("Storytellers are valuable allies and their testimony is to be rated high, for they usually know many things between heaven and earth that our academic wisdom does not even dream of"), but there is not much doubt that *Gradiva* is a poor and silly little novel well deserving its obscurity, and that Freud in overrating it and analyzing it at length has written his own very much better novel.

Actually the pathography tradition was not new with Freud, but merely continued, in long-range unscientific psychiatric diagnosis, a nineteenth-century tradition of long-range unscientific medical diagnosis, in which a learned physician deduced for the eager literary world that from his poetry Byron must have had gallstones, or Pope high blood pressure. This is the tone not so much of Freud as of many of his disciples, including some of the rebels. It is the tone, for example, of Brill's discussion of the love of poetry as simply an expression of oral eroticism, "a chewing and sucking of beautiful words."

The only psychoanalyst who has devoted himself to art with any thoroughness is Otto Rank. Before he broke with Freud in the early twenties, Rank wrote a number of valuable psychoanalytic literary studies: *The Artist* in 1907, *The Myth of the Birth of the*

Hero in 1909, a study of the *Lohengrin* story in 1911, *The Incest-Motive in Poetry and Legend* in 1912, and two essays in 1914 and 1922 later published as *Don Juan and the Double* (most of these available in English). Of these, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* is perhaps most important. Picking up a suggestion of Freud's that he try Galton's method of creating an archetype of the mythic birth (and apparently ignorant of the fact that a similar job had been done, along very fragmentary lines, for the whole life of the hero by Alfred Nutt), Rank achieved an impressive psychoanalytic study in comparative mythology, very important to literature and probably the genesis of Lord Raglan's invaluable *The Hero* in 1935.

The Incest-Motive included a number of stimulating Oedipal analyses, among them one of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (pointing out that Brutus, Cassius, and Antony are three splittings of Caesar's "son"—the first representing his rebelliousness, the second his remorsefulness, and the third his natural piety) and one of Baudelaire's sonnets, "The Giantess." After Rank broke with Freud, he wrote little of any value about art,⁴ and his major book on the subject, *Art and the Artist*, published in English in 1932, is a dull and very Germanic treatise on aesthetics, drawing chiefly on warmed-over anthropology, centering the art-urge in a desire to immortalize the self, warning that increasing consciousness will be the death of art, and resisting psychoanalytic interpretations at a number of points where they would prove valuable, while in other places vulgarizing psychoanalysis overzealously, particularly in a reading of *Hamlet* as direct autobiography.

Of full-length psychoanalytic literary studies by professional analysts or psychologists, the best and most influential is probably — Ernest Jones's study of *Hamlet* in his *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis*. In a hundred informed and closely reasoned pages, revealing a real Shakespeare scholarship and general literacy, Jones demolishes every *Hamlet* theory that had been previously maintained; elaborates and sustains his own, an Oedipal structure unconscious in *Hamlet*, unconscious in Shakespeare, and unconscious in the audience; and substantially increases appreciation of the play by showing what no one had yet succeeded in showing, the

reasonableness and inevitability of its action, although still leaving a number of questions unanswered. Jones has done no other comparable literary analysis, but his book contains a number of other essays suggestively applying psychoanalysis to such disparate fields as art, folklore, history, politics, religion, and even journalism.

A book as sensitive to literary values and far from the pathography as Jones's *Hamlet* essay, if not as intrinsically exciting, is Charles Baudouin's *Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics*, a lengthy study of poetic symbolism in Verhaeren by a man who is himself a poet. Baudouin's psychoanalysis is extremely eclectic, drawing impartially on Freud, Jung, Adler, Rank, and Ribot. Although it rarely goes all out in psychoanalytic readings, Baudouin's book is a remarkable job of detailed symbolic analysis with significant incidental forays anticipating a number of new critical techniques: multiple translation of meaning into several different terminologies; polarization of obsessive imagery into paired terms in parallel columns; and discussion of the significance of sounds and auditory symbolism. Baudouin insists early in the book that analysis of the works of genius will show genius, not neurosis, but then he falls into error at the other extreme, and insists at the end that because a poem is "an admirable illustration of the psychology of sublimation," therefore "true," it is a "beautiful" poem, and that because the poems generally accepted as Verhaeren's masterpieces are those "most fraught with symbolical meaning," other poems as fraught with psychological meaning are probably also masterpieces.

At the other pole from Baudouin's analysis of Verhaeren is the work of his countryman the French psychoanalyst René Laforgue, on Baudelaire. *The Defeat of Baudelaire* is pure pathography, subtitled *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Neurosis of Charles Baudelaire*, and announces its intention frankly on the first page:

It is not my purpose to consider Baudelaire's position in literature; neither do I wish to undertake an analysis of his art. For me, Baudelaire is simply a man, a sick man among many others, a victim of life. He is a representative of an army of the misunderstood. My only reason for discussing him first before considering the others is that thanks to his art he is more accessible to study and within easier reach of comprehension.

Frankly using Baudelaire's poems, journals, and records, along with Porché's biography, as no more than clinical records, Laforgue finds that Baudelaire had an Oedipus complex, a masochistic complex with whipping and masturbation fantasies, latent homosexuality, penis-inferiority, probably impotence and voyeurism (the last based on an absolutely conjectural childhood experience), and constipation. For Laforgue, who continually insists that his aims in writing the book included warning educators not to frighten children and reforming the treatment of criminals, the artist is a "privileged" neurotic who can create art, and poetic form is a device for making the poet's neurosis unrecognizable except by clinicians. Nothing more need be said about it in a discussion of literary criticism.

Among the great number of literary discussions by psychoanalytic psychiatrists, only two more can be touched on, as examples of current American practice. Lawrence S. Kubie, under the title *The Literature of Horror*, wrote an article on Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and one on Caldwell's *God's Little Acre* for the *Saturday Review of Literature* in 1934 (along with one on Hemingway that seems never to have appeared). Kubie makes some good points, particularly in the Faulkner piece, among them: a discussion of the erotization of horror and anxiety in contemporary American literature; the insistence that he is not psychoanalyzing authors, that the statement that *Sanctuary* is a series of male impotence fantasies is *not* the statement that Faulkner is impotent, but merely that he is imaginative; and the much-needed rejection of Faulkner's claim that the book is a piece of meaningless hack work. He ends up, however, with the rather oversimple formulation of Popeye as id, Benbow as ego, and the mob as superego, an example of where terminology can lead with no checkrein on it. The Caldwell piece continues some of these topics, but is less concerned with the work itself than with exploring the nature of obscenity and the implications of reader reactions to it.

A more literate work, but limited to the pathography, is Saul Rosenzweig's essay "The Ghost of Henry James" in *Character and Personality* for December 1943, reprinted in the Fall 1944 *Partisan Review*. Rosenzweig uses some of James's short stories to establish

James as suffering from castration anxiety and inferiority complex, with constitutional bisexuality "a speculative possibility." Despite this narrow clinical formulation, and liberal salting with terms like "repression," "frustration," "sublimation," and "overcompensation," Rosenzweig's actual readings of the stories are extremely shrewd and sensitive to literary values, an example of how valuable he and men like him could be if they turned their method to analyzing the work and its *form* rather than the man (or in Rosenzweig's case, if he had even attempted, for example, to discuss the concealment-evasion aspects of James's late baroque style).

The professional literary men who have used Freud and psychoanalysis are almost innumerable. The first orthodox use came as early as 1912, in Frederick Clarke Prescott's article "Poetry and Dreams" in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, reprinted in book form in 1919. Prescott took Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, not then translated into English, and applied it systematically to the interpretation of poetry, finding poetry to be, like dreams, the disguised fulfillment of repressed wishes, and suggesting that the mechanisms Freud found in the "dream work" might also be the mechanisms of the "poetic work." At the same time he attempted to support and document many of Freud's new and shocking contentions with quotations from literary men through the ages. Despite a somewhat mechanical application, a concept of poetry as "escape from reality," and a contempt for Coleridge's "obfuscations" on fancy and imagination, Prescott's book is an important beginning, and later work has been heavily dependent on it. In 1922 he published *The Poetic Mind*, a fuller treatment, which despite a number of things of value, among them an anticipation of Empson's "ambiguity" and an insistence on plural meaning, represents a considerable falling-off, with the Freudian psychoanalysis watered down to fit a new romantic mysticism and Shelley-worship.

One of the first lay attempts to use psychoanalytic concepts in criticizing specific works of literature came in 1919, in Conrad Aiken's *Scepticisms: Notes on Contemporary Poetry*. Aiken not only utilized Freud's view of art, but attempted to reconcile it

with Kostyleff's theory of poetry as a verbo-motor discharge, Pavlov's concept of the conditioned reflex, and other scraps of assorted psychology. Not much insight came from this jumble, but Aiken got from Freud the basic attitude of contemporary criticism, anticipating Richards' influential statement of it by a few years: that poetry is a human product, satisfying human needs like any other, and that it has discoverable origins and functions, open to analysis.

One of the earliest English exponents of psychoanalytic criticism was Robert Graves, in a series of books including *On English Poetry* (1922), *The Meaning of Dreams* (1924), and *Poetic Unreason* (1925). Graves attempted detailed psychoanalytic readings of specific poems, particularly in *The Meaning of Dreams*, where he analyzed Keats's "La Belle Dame sans merci," Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," and a poem of his own. Perhaps because Graves largely rejected Freud and Jung in favor of the psychoanalytic theories of W. H. R. Rivers, emphasizing dissociation of unconscious personalities and traumatic experiences; perhaps because he attempted to correlate the best poetry with the best unconscious personality conflicts; more likely because he combined ignorance with brashness to an amazing degree, the results were atrocious and may have discouraged later British efforts. (The one completely successful application by an English critic of psychoanalytic concepts to a work of art is William Empson's essay on *Alice in Wonderland*.)

A special and rather confusing English case is Herbert Read. No one has written so enthusiastically on the importance of psychoanalysis, and in fact of all psychology, for literature and literary criticism. He writes that the critic must pick from psychology, particularly psychoanalysis, "his brightest weapons," that in some areas the critic can only ask questions for psychology to answer, that psychology has finally been able to explain aesthetic mysteries like *catharsis*, and so on. In an article on "Psychoanalysis and Criticism" in *Reason and Romanticism* (later expanded as "The Nature of Criticism" in *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism*) Read has written a remarkably reasoned and persuasive argument for psychoanalytic criticism, emphasizing eclecticism, moderation,

and the limitations and dangers of psychoanalysis as well as its enormous possibilities. The only trouble with this is that Read has practiced very little of what he preaches. Aside from his book on Wordsworth, a long essay on Shelley, and a study of the Brontës, none of them very deep or very perceptive, and the frequent use of some Freudian terms and Jung's "introversion-extraversion," Read's own work seems to have been almost untouched by psychoanalysis. Like Moses, he saw the Promised Land, but somehow never managed to enter it. W. H. Auden similarly has done a brilliant analysis of Freud's significance for art in "Psychology and Art Today" in the symposium *The Arts Today*, without ever making much use of the method in his criticism.

Lionel Trilling's case in America is somewhat comparable. He wrote a remarkably good estimate of Freud's literary and aesthetic significance, reflecting wide familiarity with Freud's work, in the *Kenyon Review* for Spring 1940, pointing out that in one respect Freud actually sees the human mind as a poetry-making organ, and that psychoanalysis is thus a science of tropes. However, he so hedged this around with limitations based on a contrary tendency he saw in Freud, a contemptuous attitude toward art, that it ended up more or less on the fence. Trilling's critical practice, in his studies of Matthew Arnold and E. M. Forster, reflects this divided mind, and although his use of psychoanalytic insights is fairly extensive, they tend to be always tentative, halfhearted, and sometimes stillborn.

Other American critics who have attempted to utilize psychoanalysis include Edmund Wilson and Van Wyck Brooks, the former moving increasingly toward it as he discarded Marxism, the latter sampling tasty bits of every psychoanalysis eventually to discard them all. William Troy has done at least one psychoanalytic piece, on Stendhal's Oedipus complex. Of the men influenced by Brooks, Frank went head-over-heels for the mistier areas of psychoanalysis, to repudiate them all later, psychoanalysts being "philosophically shallow men," for his private mysticism—holism, the good life, and the athletic soul; and Mumford picked up Raymond Weaver's silly and lyric biography of Melville, *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic*, and based on it a sillier and even more lyric

one of his own, *Herman Melville*, full of undigested Freud and plain bad taste ("it may be" that Melville's wife "was timid and irresponsive as a lover"). A few other psychoanalytic biographies of the twenties and thirties seem better and more perceptive, like Katharine Anthony's of Margaret Fuller and Louisa May Alcott, Rosamond Langbridge's study of Charlotte Brontë, and Joseph Wood Krutch's biography of Poe, although they could all have ended on a variant of the ultimate "nothing but" fallacy with which Krutch ended his: "We have, then, traced Poe's art to an abnormal condition of the nerves."

Much contemporary American critical use of psychoanalysis has in fact been a good deal worse. The chief sinners are the amateur sexologists and Peeping Toms of criticism, typified by Ludwig Lewisohn's *Expression in America* (Thoreau, for example, is a clammy prig, the result of being hopelessly inhibited to the point of psychical impotence, or else hopelessly undersexed; and almost every American writer is similarly debunked). Only a few steps above this are such readings as Thomas Beer's straight sexual interpretation of Henry Adams in *The Mauve Decade*, Mark Van Doren's debunking of Whitman's poetry and ideas on the basis of his homosexuality, and Edward Dahlberg's sexual readings of all literature in *Do These Bones Live*, in the name of anti-psychoanalysis and Tolstoy's statement that man's deepest suffering is always the tragedy of the bedroom.

Other psychologies besides psychoanalysis have been turned on art with a good deal of success in our time. Perhaps the most influential is the integrated psychology of I. A. Richards, drawing on neurological psychology, behaviorism, psychoanalysis, and Gestalt, as well as his own empirical observations. Kenneth Burke, who has used Freud extensively, and has written the most penetrating analysis I know of the implications and necessary modifications of psychoanalysis for criticism in "Freud—and the Analysis of Poetry" in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, has also drawn on every modern psychological school to achieve an integrated psychology which he calls "phenomenological," based chiefly on Gestalt, which would avoid "the tenuousness of the purely intro-

spective" as well as "the impoverishment of the purely behavioristic."

A psychology that seems at least as promising for literary criticism as psychoanalysis is the Gestalt school, which as far as I know has had little direct professional application to literature.⁵ This seems due in part to the laboratory-science emphasis given it by its founders, Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Köhler, in favor of phenomena objectively ascertainable in a controlled experiment. So far the concern of the school has chiefly been with the conscious surface of the mind, with processes like "perception" and "learning," which comes clear in Wertheimer's book *Productive Thinking*, where the examples tend inevitably to come from the reasonable processes of geometric theorems and Einstein's discovery of relativity rather than from less reasonable and ascertainable phenomena, like poetic images or Shakespeare's discovery of Lear. Nevertheless, the basic conception of the school, that reaction is to the total configuration or *Gestalt* of an experience, rather than to any single "stimulus," and that in this respect the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and determines their character, seems to be one of central relevance to problems of literature and art. Genetically, in fact, the Gestalt conception of total configuration was inspired by the formal nature of art, in von Ehrenfels' recognition that when a musical melody is transposed, and all the component notes changed, its *Gestaltqualität* remains the same, because the relations of the notes are preserved. The artist's problem of communicating the essential pattern of his experience, through a medium in which he did not have the experience, and often one utilizing a different sense (a landscape in a poem, a bird song in a sculpture, etc.) would seem to be precisely a matter of this *Gestaltqualität*, and thus an area in which Gestalt psychology could be particularly fruitful. Its theoretical framework, emphasizing "field" concepts, makes full provision for the behavioral patterns of the unconscious mind, which are just as configurative, and recognizes in theory that the incongruous relationships of poetic metaphor are as "productive" perceptions for poetry as the more traditional relationships of mathematics are for science. There is not much doubt that when the younger integrative gestal-

tists, followers of the late Kurt Lewin (who wrote in *Principles of Topological Psychology*: "the only approach to deeper problems was the brilliant work of Freud"), and social gestaltists like S. E. Asch and J. F. Brown finally turn their attention to the structural relations, configurations, "fields," and "topology" of works of literature, and professional critics pick up and extend their insights, a new area of tremendous value will open up to literary criticism.

5

A few problems raised by Miss Bodkin's work and psychological criticism in general remain to be discussed. The first of them is her moral and religious emphasis, present in *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* but not obtrusive; very obtrusive in her only other book, a rather disappointing pamphlet published in 1941 called *The Quest for Salvation in an Ancient and a Modern Play*. In it Miss Bodkin compares the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus and T. S. Eliot's *Family Reunion*, principally in terms of their different salvations. Salvation in the *Eumenides*, she finds, is collective and historical, with Athena's conversion of the Erinyes, or Furies, into the Eumenides, or Fair-Minded Ones, and a consequent better order of justice for the community. Although Eliot's predicament is as collective as Aeschylus', Miss Bodkin maintains, his hero's salvation at the end is entirely individual and spiritual, in terms of new personal relations and psychological insight, by which his private "Furies" are pacified. On the strength of this comparison, Miss Bodkin explores the contrast between the Athenian age and our own in terms of morality, justice, and peace. She writes:

Certainly we know beforehand that the poet of today cannot write in such mood of exultation as seems to have possessed Athenians of the time of Aeschylus. Their poet could shape his drama to reveal to his fellow citizens and celebrate with them the greatness of their city's achievement. The advance of the human spirit accomplished by Athens leads our thought forward today to the greater advance—conceived by us but still far from achievement—of some tribunal, or center of government, that should replace violence by equity between nations throughout the world.

Had we succeeded in founding an institution that could tame national resentments, as resentments have been tamed between fellow citizens, some myth of divine intervention might take shape for us in poetry reflecting our collective triumph. But at this dark hour of the world's fortunes, if poet of ours fashions a myth of achieved deliverance, it is individual and spiritual triumph only his symbol can reflect.

In *The Quest for Salvation* Miss Bodkin is still to some extent concerned with psychoanalytic readings; she still quotes Freud and Jung and even suggests a Furies archetype, the energy of passion fixed in an evil relationship but capable of transformation into a good one. In line with her new emphasis, however, her chief quoting is of assorted mystic doctrine, including that of John Macmurray's *The Structure of Religious Experience*, Nicolai Hartman's *Ethics*, and Whitehead's concept of "causal efficacy" in *Process and Reality*. From Hartman she picks up the view of the "super-aesthetic function of poetry in giving concrete unity and shape to 'prospective ethos'—ideals dawning in the moral consciousness of the community," and on the strength of it confesses that her pamphlet is not aesthetic study but supraesthetic study, an attempt to explore "certain realities of our common life through the medium of the poetry of these plays." Valuable as this may prove to be for ethics, religion, or international law, it seems largely the abnegation of the literary critic's function.

A major problem raised by Miss Bodkin's use of Jungian archetypes in criticism is their relation to folklore and anthropology. Her debt to Frazer is, of course, obvious, and an unsigned brief review of *Archetypal Patterns* in the *London Mercury* began "under the pleasant shadow of Frazer's *Golden Bough*. . . ." Miss Bodkin draws heavily not only on Frazer and on such later anthropologists as Emile Durkheim, G. Elliot Smith, Robert Briffault, and Alexander Goldenweiser, but specifically on the anthropological students of ancient art and religion: Gilbert Murray, Francis Cornford, Jane Harrison, R. R. Marett, and Jessie Weston. She makes particular use of Cornford, whose "spiritual power," derived from "the collective emotion and activity of the group," she finds an anticipation of Jung's collective unconscious, just as she

finds Murray anticipating Jung's archetypes in his "situations deeply implanted in the memory of the race, stamped as it were upon our physical organism."

Miss Bodkin's central point of view is the ritual genesis of art associated with the Cambridge group, and when she is writing most rationally and farthest from Jung's mystic concept of biological memory, she recognizes that the transmission of her archetypes is actually a ritual one, writing: "It may be that an influence of this kind can pass, embodied only in tradition—in the emotion communicated, first through ritual with accompanying myth and legend, then on through poetry preserving, as Virgil's poem preserves, the influence of a ritual." In an appendix to *Archetypal Patterns*, "Criticism and Primitive Ritual," Miss Bodkin makes explicit her belief in the ritual origins of art and religion and defends Eliot's references to ancient ritual in *The Waste Land* against criticism by Alec Brown, finding them an enhancement of the magic and beauty of the poem rather than scraps of pseudo learning.

There is a necessary and inevitable relationship between the genetic study of folk literature in terms of ritual origins and the functional analysis of it in terms of psychological and social needs that makes Jung's or some collective psychology as essential to folk criticism as Frazer's anthropology. Such a folk critic would have to go beyond Miss Bodkin, however, in rejecting Freud's and Jung's concept of inherited memory and treating the psychological need for these ritual patterns as having been re-created afresh in each generation by cultural conditioning, as she suggests in the quotation above. Not only are the archetypal patterns the basis of literature, as Miss Bodkin so excellently shows, but at least for our own time literature is one of the great disseminators of the archetypal patterns.

Two general questions raised by psychological criticism remain. The first is the problem, new to our own day, of criticizing the writer who has himself had serious acquaintance with psychoanalytic literature. Frederick J. Hoffman, in *Freudianism and the Literary Mind*, raises this problem in his discussion of the influence of Freud on writers like Joyce, Lawrence, Mann, and Kafka; William York Tindall, in *Forces in Modern British Literature*, dis-

cusses it in connection with Dylan Thomas and his followers; and Wertham would have run into it in connection with Richard Wright had he chosen to analyze a later work consciously using psychoanalytic discoveries, like *The Man Who Lived Underground*. When Ernest Jones analyzed the Oedipus pattern in *Hamlet*, he could safely assume that Shakespeare had not read about the Oedipus complex in Freud and decided to organize his work around it for greater effectiveness, but the same assumption is no longer possible about writers like Joyce and Mann. In his two essays on Freud, "Freud's Position in the History of Modern Thought" and the eightieth-birthday tribute "Freud and the Future," Mann makes it clear not only that he has consciously written formal psychoanalytic insights into his novels, but also that the *Joseph* tetralogy was specifically inspired by Freudian writings. In the case of such writers (and there is every reason to assume that the situation is now permanently with us) the critic happily dredging up a psychoanalytic insight from a work is somewhat in the position of a man finding buried treasure at Fort Knox. The psychoanalytic critic can still assume that the pattern taken over is personally meaningful, since a writer expresses his basic needs as clearly in formal material consciously chosen as in unconscious material, but he can no longer assume that in revealing it he is making any substantial critical contribution. Some of the effect of sad inadequacy in such Freudian criticisms of D. H. Lawrence as Horace Gregory's *Pilgrim of the Apocalypse* undoubtedly comes from the reader's feeling that Lawrence himself could do a much deeper and more perceptive psychoanalytical criticism of either his own work or anyone else's.

Finally, there is the general problem of the possibilities and future of psychoanalytic criticism. The disappointing feature of the *Partisan Review* controversy on the subject, inspired by Dr. Rosenzweig's pathography of Henry James, is that it was centered almost exclusively on the problem of art and neurosis, one of the questions least needing exploration these days. Only Robert Gorham Davis' contribution, "Art and Anxiety," in the Summer 1945 issue, faced the major problem of suggesting what psychoanalysis *can* do rather than defining what it cannot do. In a few suggestive

hints analyzing the Red Ridinghood story; in a call for joint Freudian and Marxist analyses, unsimplified and unvulgarized; and particularly in a formulation of the field for psychoanalytic criticism in the study of *how* a work of art satisfies unconscious emotional needs (that is, a psychoanalytic study of *form*), Davis sketched out the hopeful direction.

The obvious limitation of traditional Freudian literary analysis is that only one study can be written, since every additional one would turn out to say the same thing. Ernest Jones could do a beautiful job finding the underlying Oedipus complex in *Hamlet*, but had he gone on to analyze *Lear* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or the *Sonnets* he would have found to his surprise that they reflected Shakespeare's Oedipus complex too, and, in fact, granting his theories, he would have made the same discovery about any other work of art. A criticism that can only say, however ingeniously, that this work is a result of the author's repressed Oedipal desires, and that everybody has repressed Oedipal desires, turns out not to be saying very much.

Here Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* is the hope. By focusing, not on the neurosis of the artist, not on the complexes concealed beneath the work, not on the art as a disguised fulfillment of repressed wishes, but on *how* a work of art is emotionally satisfying, what relationship its formal structure bears to the basic patterns and symbols of our psyches, she has furnished psychological criticism with endless vistas. What does this poem do, she asks, and how does it do it? These are the traditional questions of criticism; psychologies—psychoanalysis perhaps more than any other—offer great resources in answering them, and the answers will be as different as the poems. Let it be said to the credit of this all but unknown woman and her book that in one sense she performed as essential a job for literary criticism as Sigmund Freud did. He turned the blinding light of science on the depths of the human unconscious; she showed that in that fierce glare even the most delicate poem need not wither away.

¹ In keeping with this view, Jung has written very little on specific artists and works of art. The only literary studies I know of are a brief discussion

of Goethe's *Faust* in *Psychology of the Unconscious*, and an analysis of Joyce's *Ulysses* in *Wirklichkeit der Seele*.

² *William Ernest Henley*, a biographical study by Jerome Hamilton Buckley, which appeared in 1946, is an Adler-influenced work that treats Henley's character as a "masculine protest" against his crippling bone tuberculosis, and may finally herald an Adlerian literary trend.

³ W. P. Witcutt, in *Blake: A Psychological Study*, published in England in 1946, attempted to use Jungian psychology "to indicate a path through the Blakean jungle" of the Prophetic Books. His book seems to me a maddening and almost pointless one, and makes an interesting contrast to Miss Bodkin's. Witcutt employs Jung's most mystic and theosophical concepts to turn on Blake's metaphysical muddles, and the result is confusion worse confounded.

⁴ The relationship here is not necessarily causal, although it is not necessarily irrelevant either.

⁵ A few Gestalt works on the general subject of art have been produced, among them H. E. Reese's *A Psychology of Artistic Creation*, Werner Wolff's *The Expression of Personality* (which, although it deals largely with such self-expressions as walking and talking, has obvious relevance to aesthetic expression), and Rudolf Arnheim's article "Gestalt and Art," in the *Journal of Aesthetics*, Fall 1943. Arnheim is also currently teaching a Gestalt course in the Psychology of Art at the New School for Social Research, and contributed an essay, "Psychological Notes on the Poetical Process," to *Poets at Work*, Charles D. Abbott's symposium on the collection of poets' work sheets in the University of Buffalo library.

LIONEL TRILLING

Art and Neurosis

THE QUESTION OF the mental health of the artist has engaged the attention of our culture since the beginning of the Romantic Movement. Before that time it was commonly said that the poet was "mad," but this was only a manner of speaking, a way of saying that the mind of the poet worked in different fashion from the mind of the philosopher; it had no real reference to the mental hygiene of the man who was the poet. But in the early nineteenth century, with the development of a more elaborate psychology and a stricter and more literal view of mental and emotional normality, the statement was more strictly and literally intended. So much so, indeed, that Charles Lamb, who knew something about madness at close quarters and a great deal about art, undertook to refute in his brilliant essay, "On the Sanity of True Genius," the idea that the exercise of the imagination was a kind of insanity. And some eighty years later, the idea having yet further entrenched itself, Bernard Shaw felt called upon to argue the sanity of art, but his cogency was of no more avail than Lamb's. In recent years the connection between art and mental illness has been formulated not only by those who are openly or covertly

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hostile to art, but also and more significantly by those who are most intensely partisan to it. The latter willingly and even eagerly accept the idea that the artist is mentally ill and go on to make his illness a condition of his power to tell the truth.

This conception of artistic genius is indeed one of the characteristic notions of our culture. I should like to bring it into question. To do so is to bring also into question certain early ideas of Freud's and certain conclusions which literary laymen have drawn from the whole tendency of the Freudian psychology. From the very start it was recognized that psychoanalysis was likely to have important things to say about art and artists. Freud himself thought so, yet when he first addressed himself to the subject he said many clumsy and misleading things. I have elsewhere and at length tried to separate the useful from the useless and even dangerous statements about art that Freud has made. To put it briefly here, Freud had some illuminating and even beautiful insights into certain particular works of art which made complex use of the element of myth. Then, without specifically undertaking to do so, his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* offers a brilliant and comprehensive explanation of our interest in tragedy. And what is of course most important of all—it is a point to which I shall return—Freud, by the whole tendency of his psychology, establishes the *naturalness* of artistic thought. Indeed, it is possible to say of Freud that he ultimately did more for our understanding of art than any other writer since Aristotle; and this being so, it can only be surprising that in his early work he should have made the error of treating the artist as a neurotic who escapes from reality by means of "substitute gratifications."

As Freud went forward he insisted less on this simple formulation. Certainly it did not have its original force with him when, at his seventieth birthday celebration, he disclaimed the right to be called the discoverer of the unconscious, saying that whatever he may have done for the systematic understanding of the unconscious, the credit for its discovery properly belonged to the literary masters. And psychoanalysis has inherited from him a tenderness for art which is real although sometimes clumsy, and nowadays most psychoanalysts of any personal sensitivity are embarrassed by occa-

sions which seem to lead them to reduce art to a formula of mental illness. Nevertheless Freud's early belief in the essential neuroticism of the artist found an all too fertile ground—found, we might say, the very ground from which it first sprang, for, when he spoke of the artist as a neurotic, Freud was adopting one of the popular beliefs of his age. Most readers will see this belief as the expression of the industrial rationalization and the bourgeois philistinism of the nineteenth century. In this they are partly right. The nineteenth century established the basic virtue of “getting up at eight, shaving close at a quarter-past, breakfasting at nine, going to the City at ten, coming home at half-past five, and dining at seven.” The Messrs. Podsnap who instituted this scheduled morality inevitably decreed that the arts must celebrate it and nothing else. “Nothing else to be permitted to these . . . vagrants the Arts, on pain of excommunication. Nothing else To Be—anywhere!” We observe that the virtuous day ends with dinner—bed and sleep are naturally not part of the Reality that Is, and nothing must be set forth which will, as Mr. Podsnap put it, bring a Blush to the Cheek of a Young Person.

The excommunication of the arts, when it was found necessary, took the form of pronouncing the artist mentally degenerate, a device which eventually found its theorist in Max Nordau. In the history of the arts this is new. The poet was always known to belong to a touchy tribe—*genus irritabile* was a tag anyone would know—and ever since Plato the process of the inspired imagination, as we have said, was thought to be a special one of some interest, which the similitude of madness made somewhat intelligible. But this is not quite to say that the poet was the victim of actual mental aberration. The eighteenth century did not find the poet to be less than other men, and certainly the Renaissance did not. If he was a professional, there might be condescension to his social status, but in a time which deplored all professionalism whatever, this was simply a way of asserting the high value of poetry, which ought not to be compromised by trade. And a certain good nature marked even the snubbing of the professional. At any rate, no one was likely to identify the poet with the weakling. Indeed, the Ren-

aissance ideal held poetry to be, like arms or music, one of the signs of manly competence.

The change from this view of things cannot be blamed wholly on the bourgeois or philistine public. Some of the "blame" must rest with the poets themselves. The Romantic poets were as proud of their art as the vaunting poets of the sixteenth century, but one of them talked with an angel in a tree and insisted that Hell was better than Heaven and sexuality holier than chastity; another told the world that he wanted to lie down like a tired child and weep away this life of care; another asked so foolish a question as "Why did I laugh tonight?"; and yet another explained that he had written one of his best poems in a drugged sleep. The public took them all at their word—they were not as other men. Zola, in the interests of science, submitted himself to examination by fifteen psychiatrists and agreed with their conclusion that his genius had its source in the neurotic elements of his temperament. Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine found virtue and strength in their physical and mental illness and pain. W. H. Auden addresses his "wound" in the cherishing language of a lover, thanking it for the gift of insight it has bestowed. "Knowing you," he says, "has made me understand." And Edmund Wilson in his striking phrase, "the wound and the bow," has formulated for our time the idea of the characteristic sickness of the artist, which he represents by the figure of Philoctetes, the Greek warrior who was forced to live in isolation because of the disgusting odor of a suppurating wound and who yet had to be sought out by his countrymen because they had need of the magically unerring bow he possessed.

The myth of the sick artist, we may suppose, has established itself because it is of advantage to the various groups who have one or another relation with art. To the artist himself the myth gives some of the ancient powers and privileges of the idiot and the fool, half-prophetic creatures, or of the mutilated priest. That the artist's neurosis may be but a mask is suggested by Thomas Mann's pleasure in representing his untried youth as "sick" but his successful maturity as senatorially robust. By means of his belief in his own sickness, the artist may the more easily fulfill his

chosen, and assigned, function of putting himself into connection with the forces of spirituality and morality; the artist sees as insane the "normal" and "healthy" ways of established society, while aberration and illness appear as spiritual and moral health if only because they controvert the ways of respectable society.

Then too, the myth has its advantage for the philistine—a double advantage. On the one hand, the belief in the artist's neuroticism allows the philistine to shut his ears to what the artist says. But on the other hand it allows him to listen. For we must not make the common mistake—the contemporary philistine does want to listen, at the same time that he wants to shut his ears. By supposing that the artist has an interesting but not always reliable relation to reality, he is able to contain (in the military sense) what the artist tells him. If he did not want to listen at all, he would say "insane"; with "neurotic," which hedges, he listens when he chooses.

And in addition to its advantage to the artist and to the philistine, we must take into account the usefulness of the myth to a third group, the group of "sensitive" people, who, although not artists, are not philistines either. These people form a group by virtue of their passive impatience with philistinism, and also by virtue of their awareness of their own emotional pain and uncertainty. To these people the myth of the sick artist is the institutional sanction of their situation; they seek to approximate or acquire the character of the artist, sometimes by planning to work or even attempting to work as the artist does, always by making a connection between their own powers of mind and their consciousness of "difference" and neurotic illness.

The early attempts of psychoanalysis to deal with art went on the assumption that, because the artist was neurotic, the content of his work was also neurotic, which is to say that it did not stand in a correct relation to reality. But nowadays, as I have said, psychoanalysis is not likely to be so simple in its transactions with art. A good example of the psychoanalytical development in this respect is Dr. Saul Rosenzweig's well-known essay, "The Ghost of Henry James." This is an admirable piece of work, marked by accuracy in the reporting of the literary fact and by respect for the

value of the literary object. Although Dr. Rosenzweig explores the element of neurosis in James's life and work, he nowhere suggests that this element in any way lessens James's value as an artist or moralist. In effect he says that neurosis is a way of dealing with reality which, in real life, is uncomfortable and uneconomical, but that this judgment of neurosis in life cannot mechanically be transferred to works of art upon which neurosis has had its influence. He nowhere implies that a work of art in whose genesis a neurotic element may be found is for that reason irrelevant or in any way diminished in value. Indeed, the manner of his treatment suggests, what is of course the case, that every neurosis deals with a real emotional situation of the most intensely meaningful kind.

Yet as Dr. Rosenzweig brings his essay to its close, he makes use of the current assumption about the causal connection between the psychic illness of the artist and his power. His investigation of James, he says, "reveals the aptness of the Philoctetes pattern." He accepts the idea of "the sacrificial roots of literary power" and speaks of "the unhappy sources of James's genius." "The broader application of the inherent pattern," he says, "is familiar to readers of Edmund Wilson's recent volume *The Wound and the Bow*. . . . Reviewing the experience and work of several well-known literary masters, Wilson discloses the sacrificial roots of their power on the model of the Greek legend. In the case of Henry James, the present account . . . provides a similar insight into the unhappy sources of his genius. . . ."

This comes as a surprise. Nothing in Dr. Rosenzweig's theory requires it. For his theory asserts no more than that Henry James, predisposed by temperament and family situation to certain mental and emotional qualities, was in his youth injured in a way which he believed to be sexual; that he unconsciously invited the injury in the wish to identify himself with his father, who himself had been similarly injured—"castrated": a leg had been amputated—and under strikingly similar circumstances; this resulted for the younger Henry James in a certain pattern of life and in a pre-occupation in his work with certain themes which more or less obscurely symbolize his sexual situation. For this I think Dr. Rosenzweig makes a sound case. Yet I submit that this is not

the same thing as disclosing the roots of James's power or discovering the sources of his genius. The essay which gives Edmund Wilson's book its title and cohering principle does not explicitly say that the roots of power are sacrificial and that the source of genius is unhappy. Where it is explicit, it states only that "genius and disease, like strength and mutilation, may be inextricably bound up together," which of course, on its face, says no more than that personality is integral and not made up of detachable parts; and from this there is no doubt to be drawn the important practical and moral implication that we cannot judge or dismiss a man's genius and strength because of our awareness of his disease or mutilation. The Philoctetes legend in itself does not suggest anything beyond this. It does not suggest that the wound is the price of the bow, or that without the wound the bow may not be possessed or drawn. Yet Dr. Rosenzweig has accurately summarized the force and, I think, the intention of Mr. Wilson's whole book; its several studies do seem to say that effectiveness in the arts does depend on sickness.

An examination of this prevalent idea might well begin with the observation of how pervasive and deeply rooted is the notion that power may be gained by suffering. Even at relatively high stages of culture the mind seems to take easily to the primitive belief that pain and sacrifice are connected with strength. Primitive beliefs must be treated with respectful alertness to their possible truth and also with the suspicion of their being magical and irrational, and it is worth noting on both sides of the question, and in the light of what we have said about the ambiguous relation of the neurosis to reality, that the whole economy of the neurosis is based exactly on this idea of the *quid pro quo* of sacrificial pain: the neurotic person unconsciously subscribes to a system whereby he gives up some pleasure or power, or inflicts pain on himself in order to secure some other power or some other pleasure.

In the ingrained popular conception of the relation between suffering and power there are actually two distinct although related ideas. One is that there exists in the individual a fund of power which has outlets through various organs or faculties, and that if its outlet through one organ or faculty be prevented, it will flow

to increase the force or sensitivity of another. Thus it is popularly believed that the sense of touch is intensified in the blind not so much by the will of the blind person to adapt himself to the necessities of his situation as, rather, by a sort of mechanical redistribution of power. And this idea would seem to explain, if not the origin of the ancient mutilation of priests, then at least a common understanding of their sexual sacrifice.

The other idea is that a person may be taught by, or proved by, the endurance of pain. There will easily come to mind the ritual suffering that is inflicted at the tribal initiation of youths into full manhood or at the admission of the apprentice into the company of journeyman adepts. This idea in sophisticated form found its way into high religion at least as early as Aeschylus, who held that man achieves knowledge of God through suffering, and it was from the beginning an important element of Christian thought. In the nineteenth century the Christianized notion of the didactic suffering of the artist went along with the idea of his mental degeneration and even served as a sort of countermyth to it. Its doctrine was that the artist, a man of strength and health, experienced and suffered, and thus learned both the facts of life and his artistic craft. "I am the man, I suffered, I was there," ran his boast, and he derived his authority from the knowledge gained through suffering.

There can be no doubt that both these ideas represent a measure of truth about mental and emotional power. The idea of didactic suffering expresses a valuation of experience and of steadfastness. The idea of natural compensation for the sacrifice of some faculty also says something that can be rationally defended: one cannot be and do everything and the whole-hearted absorption in any enterprise, art for example, means that we must give up other possibilities, even parts of ourselves. And there is even a certain validity to the belief that the individual has a fund of undifferentiated energy which presses the harder upon what outlets are available to it when it has been deprived of the normal number.

Then, in further defense of the belief that artistic power is connected with neurosis, we can say that there is no doubt that what we call mental illness may be the source of psychic knowledge. Some neurotic people, because they are more apprehensive than

normal people, are able to see more of certain parts of reality and to see them with more intensity. And many neurotic or psychotic patients are in certain respects in closer touch with the actualities of the unconscious than are normal people. Further, the expression of a neurotic or psychotic conception of reality is likely to be more intense than a normal one.

Yet when we have said all this, it is still wrong, I believe, to find the root of the artist's power and the source of his genius in neurosis. To the idea that literary power and genius spring from pain and neurotic sacrifice there are two major objections. The first has to do with the assumed uniqueness of the artist as a subject of psychoanalytical explanation. The second has to do with the true meaning of power and genius.

One reason why writers are considered to be more available than other people to psychoanalytical explanation is that they tell us what is going on inside them. Even when they do not make an actual diagnosis of their malaises or describe "symptoms," we must bear it in mind that it is their profession to deal with fantasy in some form or other. It is in the nature of the writer's job that he exhibit his unconscious. He may disguise it in various ways, but disguise is not concealment. Indeed, it may be said that the more a writer takes pains with his work to remove it from the personal and subjective, the more—and not the less—he will express his true unconscious, although not what passes with most for the unconscious.

Further, the writer is likely to be a great hand at personal letters, diaries, and autobiographies: indeed, almost the only good autobiographies are those of writers. The writer is more aware of what happens to him or goes on in him and often finds it necessary or useful to be articulate about his inner states, and prides himself on telling the truth. Thus, only a man as devoted to the truth of the emotions as Henry James was would have informed the world, despite his characteristic reticence, of an accident so intimate as his. We must not of course suppose that a writer's statements about his intimate life are equivalent to true statements about his unconscious, which, by definition, he doesn't consciously know; but they may be useful clues to the nature of an entity about which we

can make statements of more or less cogency, although never statements of certainty; or they at least give us what is surely related to a knowledge of his unconscious—that is, an insight into his personality.¹

But while the validity of dealing with the writer's intellectual life in psychoanalytical terms is taken for granted, the psychoanalytical explanation of the intellectual life of scientists is generally speaking not countenanced. The old myth of the mad scientist, with the exception of an occasional mad psychiatrist, no longer exists. The social position of science requires that it should cease, which leads us to remark that those partisans of art who insist on explaining artistic genius by means of psychic imbalance are in effect capitulating to the dominant mores which hold that the members of the respectable professions are, however dull they may be, free from neurosis. Scientists, to continue with them as the best example of the respectable professions, do not usually give us the clues to their personalities which writers habitually give. But no one who has ever lived observantly among scientists will claim that they are without an unconscious or even that they are free from neurosis. How often, indeed, it is apparent that the devotion to science, if it cannot be called a neurotic manifestation, at least can be understood as going very cozily with neurotic elements in the temperament, such as, for example, a marked compulsiveness. Of scientists as a group we can say that they are less concerned with the manifestations of personality, their own or others', than are writers as a group. But this relative indifference is scarcely a sign of normality—indeed, if we choose to regard it with the same sort of eye with which the characteristics of writers are regarded, we might say the indifference to matters of personality is in itself a suspicious evasion.

It is the basic assumption of psychoanalysis that the acts of *every* person are influenced by the forces of the unconscious. Scientists, bankers, lawyers, or surgeons, by reason of the traditions of their professions, practice concealment and conformity; but it is difficult to believe that an investigation according to psychoanalytical principles would fail to show that the strains and imbalances of their psyches are not of the same frequency as those of writers,

and of similar kind. I do not mean that everybody has the same troubles and identical psyches, but only that there is no special category for writers.²

If this is so, and if we still want to relate the writer's power to his neurosis, we must be willing to relate all intellectual power to neurosis. We must find the roots of Newton's power in his emotional extravagances, and the roots of Darwin's power in his sorely neurotic temperament, and the roots of Pascal's mathematical genius in the impulses which drove him to extreme religious masochism—I choose but the classic examples. If we make the neurosis-power equivalence at all, we must make it in every field of endeavor. Logician, economist, botanist, physicist, theologian—no profession may be so respectable or so remote or so rational as to be exempt from the psychological interpretation.³

Further, not only power but also failure or limitation must be accounted for by the theory of neurosis, and not merely failure or limitation in life but even failure or limitation in art. Thus it is often said that the warp of Dostoevsky's mind accounts for the brilliance of his psychological insights. But it is never said that the same warp of Dostoevsky's mind also accounted for his deficiency in insight. Freud, who greatly admired Dostoevsky, although he did not like him, observed that "his insight was entirely restricted to the workings of the abnormal psyche. Consider his astounding helplessness before the phenomenon of love; he really only understands either crude, instinctive desire or masochistic submission or love from pity."⁴ This, we must note, is not merely Freud's comment on the extent of the province which Dostoevsky chose for his own, but on his failure to understand what, given the province of his choice, he might be expected to understand.

And since neurosis can account not only for intellectual success and for failure or limitation but also for mediocrity, we have most of society involved in neurosis. To this I have no objection—I think most of society is indeed involved in neurosis. But with neurosis accounting for so much, it cannot be made exclusively to account for one man's literary power.

We have now to consider what is meant by genius when its source is identified as the sacrifice and pain of neurosis.

In the case of Henry James, the reference to the neurosis of his personal life does indeed tell us something about the latent intention of his work and thus about the reason for some large part of its interest for us. But if genius and its source are what we are dealing with, we must observe that the reference to neurosis tells us nothing about James's passion, energy, and devotion, nothing about his architectonic skill, nothing about the other themes that were important to him which are not connected with his unconscious concern with castration. We cannot, that is, make the writer's inner life exactly equivalent to his power of expressing it. Let us grant for the sake of argument that the literary genius, as distinguished from other men, is the victim of a "mutilation" and that his fantasies are neurotic.⁵ It does not then follow as the inevitable next step that his ability to express these fantasies and to impress us with them is neurotic, for that ability is what we mean by his genius. Anyone might be injured as Henry James was, and even respond within himself to the injury as James is said to have done, and yet not have his literary power.

The reference to the artist's neurosis tells us something about the material on which the artist exercises his powers, and even something about his reasons for bringing his powers into play, but it does not tell us anything about the source of his power, it makes no causal connection between them and the neurosis. And if we look into the matter, we see that there is in fact no causal connection between them. For, still granting that the poet is uniquely neurotic, what is surely not neurotic, what indeed suggests nothing but health, is his power of using his neuroticism. He shapes his fantasies, he gives them social form and reference. Charles Lamb's way of putting this cannot be improved. Lamb is denying that genius is allied to insanity; for "insanity" the modern reader may substitute "neurosis." "The ground of the mistake," he says, "is, that men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their own experience, besides the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject but has dominion over it. . . . Where he seems most to recede from

humanity, he will be found the truest to it. From beyond the scope of nature if he summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency. He is beautifully loyal to that sovereign directress, when he appears most to betray and desert her. . . . Herein the great and the little wits are differenced; that if the latter wander ever so little from nature or natural existence, they lose themselves and their readers. . . . They do not create, which implies shaping and consistency. Their imaginations are not active—for to be active is to call something into act and form—but passive as men in sick dreams.”

The activity of the artist, we must remember, may be approximated by many who are themselves not artists. Thus, the expressions of many schizophrenic people have the intense appearance of creativity and an inescapable interest and significance. But they are not works of art, and although Van Gogh may have been schizophrenic he was in addition an artist. Again, as I have already suggested, it is not uncommon in our society for certain kinds of neurotic people to imitate the artist in his life and even in his ideals and ambitions. They follow the artist in everything except successful performance. It was, I think, Otto Rank who called such people half-artists and confirmed the diagnosis of their neuroticism at the same time that he differentiated them from true artists.

Nothing is so characteristic of the artist as his power of shaping his work, of subjugating his raw material, however aberrant it be from what we call normality, to the consistency of nature. It would be possible to deny that whatever disease or mutilation the artist may suffer is an element of his production which has its effect on every part of it, but disease and mutilation are available to us all—life provides them with prodigal generosity. What marks the artist is his power to shape the material of pain we all have.

At this point, with our recognition of life's abundant provision of pain, we are at the very heart of our matter, which is the meaning we may assign to neurosis and the relation we are to suppose it to have with normality. Here Freud himself can be of help, although it must be admitted that what he tells us may at first seem somewhat contradictory and confusing.

Freud's study of Leonardo da Vinci is an attempt to understand

why Leonardo was unable to pursue his artistic enterprises, feeling compelled instead to advance his scientific investigations. The cause of this Freud traces back to certain childhood experiences not different in kind from the experiences which Dr. Rosenzweig adduces to account for certain elements in the work of Henry James. And when he has completed his study Freud makes this *caveat*: "Let us expressly emphasize that we have never considered Leonardo as a neurotic. . . . We no longer believe that health and disease, normal and nervous, are sharply distinguished from each other. We know today that neurotic symptoms are substitutive formations for certain repressive acts which must result in the course of our development from the child to the cultural man, that we all produce such substitutive formations, and that only the amount, intensity, and distribution of these substitutive formations justify the practical conception of illness. . . ." The statement becomes the more striking when we remember that in the course of his study Freud has had occasion to observe that Leonardo was both homosexual and sexually inactive. I am not sure that the statement that Leonardo was not a neurotic is one that Freud would have made at every point in the later development of psychoanalysis, yet it is in conformity with his continuing notion of the genesis of culture. And the *practical*, the quantitative or economic, conception of illness he insists on in a passage in the *Introductory Lectures*. "The neurotic symptoms," he says, ". . . are activities which are detrimental, or at least useless, to life as a whole; the person concerned frequently complains of them as obnoxious to him or they involve suffering and distress for him. The principal injury they inflict lies in the expense of energy they entail, and, besides this, in the energy needed to combat them. Where the symptoms are extensively developed, these two kinds of effort may exact such a price that the person suffers a very serious impoverishment in available mental energy which consequently disables him for all the important tasks of life. This result depends principally upon the amount of energy taken up in this way; therefore you will see that 'illness' is essentially a practical conception. But if you look at the matter from a theoretical point of view and ignore this question of degree, you can very well see that we are all ill, i.e., neurotic; for the conditions

required for symptom-formation are demonstrable also in normal persons."

We are all ill: the statement is grandiose, and its implications—the implications, that is, of understanding the totality of human nature in the terms of disease—are vast. These implications have never been properly met (although I believe that a few theologians have responded to them), but this is not the place to attempt to meet them. I have brought forward Freud's statement of the essential sickness of the psyche only because it stands as the refutation of what is implied by the literary use of the theory of neurosis to account for genius. For if we are ill, and if, as I have said, neurosis can account for everything, for failure and mediocrity—"a very serious impoverishment of available mental energy"—as well as for genius, it cannot uniquely account for genius.

This, however, is not to say that there is no connection between neurosis and genius, which would be tantamount, as we see, to saying that there is no connection between human nature and genius. But the connection lies wholly in a particular and special relation which the artist has to neurosis.

In order to understand what this particular and special connection is we must have clearly in mind what neurosis is. The current literary conception of neurosis as a *wound* is quite misleading. It inevitably suggests passivity, whereas, if we follow Freud, we must understand a neurosis to be an activity, an activity with a purpose, and a particular kind of activity, a conflict. This is not to say that there are no abnormal mental states which are not conflicts. There are; the struggle between elements of the unconscious may never be instituted in the first place, or it may be called off. As Freud says in a passage which follows close upon the one I last quoted, "If regressions do not call forth a prohibition on the part of the ego, no neurosis results; the libido succeeds in obtaining a real, although not a normal, satisfaction. But if the ego . . . is not in agreement with these regressions, conflict ensues." And in his essay on Dostoevsky Freud says that "there are no neurotic complete masochists," by which he means that the ego which gives way completely to masochism (or to any other pathological excess) has passed beyond neurosis; the conflict has ceased, but at the cost of

the defeat of the ego, and now some other name than that of neurosis must be given to the condition of the person who thus takes himself beyond the pain of the neurotic conflict. To understand this is to become aware of the curious complacency with which literary men regard mental disease. The psyche of the neurotic is not equally complacent; it regards with the greatest fear the chaotic and destructive forces it contains, and it struggles fiercely to keep them at bay.⁶

We come then to a remarkable paradox: we are all ill, but we are ill in the service of health, or ill in the service of life, or, at the very least, ill in the service of life-in-culture. The form of the mind's dynamics is that of the neurosis, which is to be understood as the ego's struggle against being overcome by the forces with which it coexists, and the strategy of this conflict requires that the ego shall incur pain and make sacrifices of itself, at the same time seeing to it that its pain and sacrifice be as small as they may.

But this is characteristic of all minds: no mind is exempt except those which refuse the conflict or withdraw from it; and we ask wherein the mind of the artist is unique. If he is not unique in neurosis, is he then unique in the significance and intensity of his neurosis? I do not believe that we shall go more than a little way toward a definition of artistic genius by answering this question affirmatively. A neurotic conflict cannot ever be either meaningless or merely personal; it must be understood as exemplifying cultural forces of great moment, and this is true of any neurotic conflict at all. To be sure, some neuroses may be more interesting than others, perhaps because they are fiercer or more inclusive; and no doubt the writer who makes a claim upon our interest is a man who by reason of the energy and significance of the forces in struggle within him provides us with the largest representation of the culture in which we, with him, are involved; his neurosis may thus be thought of as having a connection of concomitance with his literary powers. As Freud says in the Dostoevsky essay, "the neurosis . . . comes into being all the more readily the richer the complexity which has to be controlled by his ego." Yet even the rich complexity which his ego is doomed to control is not the definition of the artist's genius, for we can by no means say that the artist is pre-eminent

in the rich complexity of elements in conflict within him. The slightest acquaintance with the clinical literature of psychoanalysis will suggest that a rich complexity of struggling elements is no uncommon possession. And that same literature will also make it abundantly clear that the devices of art—the most extreme devices of poetry, for example—are not particular to the mind of the artist but are characteristic of mind itself.

But the artist is indeed unique in one respect, in the respect of his relation to his neurosis. He is what he is by virtue of his successful objectification of his neurosis, by his shaping it and making it available to others in a way which has its effect upon their own egos in struggle. His genius, that is, may be defined in terms of his faculties of perception, representation, and realization, and in these terms alone. It can no more be defined in terms of neurosis than can his power of walking and talking, or his sexuality. The use to which he puts his power, or the manner and style of his power, may be discussed with reference to his particular neurosis, and so may such matters as the untimely diminution or cessation of its exercise. But its essence is irreducible. It is, as we say, a gift.

We are all ill: but even a universal sickness implies an idea of health. Of the artist we must say that whatever elements of neurosis he has in common with his fellow mortals, the one part of him that is healthy, by any conceivable definition of health, is that which gives him the power to conceive, to plan, to work, and to bring his work to a conclusion. And if we are all ill, we are ill by a universal accident, not by a universal necessity, by a fault in the economy of our powers, not by the nature of the powers themselves. The Philoctetes myth, when it is used to imply a causal connection between the fantasy of castration and artistic power, tells us no more about the source of artistic power than we learn about the source of sexuality when the fantasy of castration is adduced, for the fear of castration may explain why a man is moved to extravagant exploits of sexuality, but we do not say that his sexual power itself derives from his fear of castration; and further the same fantasy may also explain impotence or homosexuality. The Philoctetes story, which has so established itself among us as explaining the source of the artist's power, is not really an ex-

planatory myth at all; it is a moral myth having reference to our proper behavior in the circumstances of the universal accident. In its juxtaposition of the wound and the bow, it tells us that we must be aware that weakness does not preclude strength nor strength weakness. It is therefore not irrelevant to the artist, but when we use it we will do well to keep in mind the other myths of the arts, recalling what Pan and Dionysius suggest of the relation of art to physiology and superabundance, remembering that to Apollo were attributed the bow and the lyre, two strengths together, and that he was given the lyre by its inventor, the baby Hermes—that miraculous infant who, the day he was born, left his cradle to do mischief: and the first thing he met with was a tortoise, which he greeted politely before scooping it from its shell, and, thought and deed being one with him, he contrived the instrument to which he sang “the glorious tale of his own begetting.” These were gods, and very early ones, but their myths tell us something about the nature and source of art even in our grim, late human present.

¹ I am by no means in agreement with the statements of Dr. Edmund Bergler about “the” psychology of the writer, but I think that Dr. Bergler has done good service in warning us against taking at their face value a writer’s statements about himself, the more especially when they are “frank.” Thus, to take Dr. Bergler’s notable example, it is usual for biographers to accept Stendhal’s statements about his open sexual feelings for his mother when he was a little boy, feelings which went with an intense hatred of his father. But Dr. Bergler believes that Stendhal unconsciously used his consciousness of his love of his mother and of his hatred of his father to mask an unconscious love of his father, which frightened him. (“Psychoanalysis of Writers and of Literary Productivity,” in *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, Vol. 1.)

² Dr. Bergler believes that there is a particular neurosis of writers, based on an oral masochism which makes them the enemy of the respectable world, courting poverty and persecution. But a later development of Dr. Bergler’s theory of oral masochism makes it *the* basic neurosis, not only of writers but of everyone who is neurotic.

³ In his interesting essay, “Writers and Madness,” in *Partisan Review*, January-February 1947, William Barrett has taken issue with this point and has insisted that a clear distinction is to be made between the relation that exists between the scientist and his work and the relation that exists between the artist and his work. The difference, as I understand it, is in the claims of the ego. The artist’s ego makes a claim upon the world which is personal in a way that the scientist’s is not, for the scientist, although he does indeed want prestige and thus “responds to one of the deepest urges of his ego, it is only that his prestige may come to attend his person through the public

world of other men; and it is not in the end his own being that is exhibited or his own voice that is heard in the learned report to the Academy." Actually, however, as is suggested by the sense which mathematicians have of the *style* of mathematical thought, the creation of the abstract thinker is as deeply involved as the artist's—see *An Essay on the Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field* by Jacques Hadamard, Princeton University Press, 1945—and he quite as much as the artist seeks to impose *himself*, to *express* himself. I am of course not maintaining that the processes of scientific thought are the same as those of artistic thought, or even that the scientist's creation is involved with his total personality *in the same way* that the artist's is—I am maintaining only that the scientist's creation is as *deeply* implicated with his total personality as is the artist's.

This point of view seems to be supported by Freud's monograph on Leonardo. One of the problems that Freud sets himself is to discover why an artist of the highest endowment should have devoted himself more and more to scientific investigation, with the result that he was unable to complete his artistic enterprises. The particular reasons for this that Freud assigns need not be gone into here; all that I wish to suggest is that Freud understands these reasons to be the working out of an inner conflict, the attempt to deal with the difficulties that have their roots in the most primitive situations. Leonardo's scientific investigations were as necessary and "compelled" and they constituted as much of a claim on the whole personality as anything the artist undertakes; and so far from being carried out for the sake of public prestige, they were largely private and personal, and were thought by the public of his time to be something very like insanity.

⁴ From a letter quoted in Theodor Reik's *From Thirty Years With Freud*, p. 175.

⁵ I am using the word *fantasy*, unless modified, in a neutral sense. A fantasy, in this sense, may be distinguished from the representation of something that actually exists, but it is not opposed to "reality" and not an "escape" from reality. Thus the idea of a rational society, or the image of a good house to be built, as well as the story of something that could never really happen, is a fantasy. There may be neurotic or nonneurotic fantasies.

⁶ In the article to which I refer in note 3, William Barrett says that he prefers the old-fashioned term "madness" to "neurosis." But it is not quite for him to choose—the words do not differ in fashion but in meaning. Most literary people, when they speak of mental illness, refer to neurosis. Perhaps one reason for this is that the neurosis is the most benign of the mental ills. Another reason is surely that psychoanalytical literature deals chiefly with the neurosis, and its symptomatology and therapy have become familiar; psychoanalysis has far less to say about psychosis, for which it can offer far less therapeutic hope. Further, the neurosis is easily put into a causal connection with the social maladjustments of our time. Other forms of mental illness of a more severe and degenerative kind are not so widely recognized by the literary person and are often assimilated to neurosis with a resulting confusion. In the present essay I deal only with the conception of neurosis, but this should not be taken to imply that I believe that other pathological mental conditions, including actual madness, do not have relevance to the general matter of the discussion.

EDMUND WILSON

Philoctetes: The Wound and the Bow

THE *Philoctetes* OF Sophocles is far from being his most popular play. The myth itself has not been one of those which have excited the modern imagination. The idea of Philoctetes' long illness and his banishment to the bleak island is dreary or distasteful to the young, who like to identify themselves with men of action—with Heracles or Perseus or Achilles; and for adults the story told by Sophocles fails to set off such emotional charges as are liberated by the crimes of the Atridae and the tragedies of the siege of Troy. Whatever may have been dashing in the legend has been lost with the other plays and poems that dealt with it. Philoctetes is hardly mentioned in Homer; and we have only an incomplete account of the plays by Aeschylus and Euripides, which hinged on a critical moment of the campaign of the Greeks at Troy and which seem to have exploited the emotions of Greek patriotism. We have only a few scattered lines and phrases from that other play by Sophocles on the subject, the *Philoctetes at Troy*, in which the humiliated hero was presumably to be cured of his ulcer and to proceed to his victory over Paris.

There survives only this one curious drama which presents

Philoctetes in exile—a drama which does not supply us at all with what we ordinarily expect of Greek tragedy, since it culminates in no catastrophe, and which indeed resembles rather our modern idea of a comedy (though the record of the lost plays of Sophocles shows that there must have been others like it). Its interest depends almost as much on the latent interplay of character, on a gradual psychological conflict, as that of *Le Misanthrope*. And it assigns itself, also, to a category even more special and less generally appealing through the fact (though this, again, was a feature not uncommon with Sophocles) that the conflict is not even allowed to take place between a man and a woman. Nor does it even put before us the spectacle—which may be made exceedingly thrilling—of the individual in conflict with his social group, which we get in such plays devoid of feminine interest as *Coriolanus* and *An Enemy of the People*. Nor is the conflict even a dual one, as most dramatic conflicts are—so that our emotions seesaw up and down between two opposed persons or groups: though Philoctetes and Odysseus struggle for the loyalty of Neoptolemus, he himself emerges more and more distinctly as representing an independent point of view, so that the contrast becomes a triple affair which makes more complicated demands on our sympathies.

A French dramatist of the seventeenth century, Chateaubrun, found the subject so inconceivable that, in trying to concoct an adaptation which would be acceptable to the taste of his time, he provided Philoctetes with a daughter named Sophie with whom Neoptolemus was to fall in love and thus bring the drama back to the reliable and eternal formula of Romeo and Juliet and the organizer who loves the factory owner's daughter. And if we look for the imprint of the play on literature since the Renaissance, we shall find a very meager record: a chapter of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, a discussion in Lessing's *Laocoön*, a sonnet of Wordsworth's, a little play by André Gide, an adaptation by John Jay Chapman—this is all, so far as I know, that has any claim to interest.

And yet the play itself is most interesting, as some of these writers have felt; and it is certainly one of Sophocles' masterpieces.

If we come upon it in the course of reading him, without having heard it praised, we are surprised to be so charmed, so moved—to find ourselves in the presence of something that is so much less crude in its subtlety than either a three-cornered modern comedy like *Candida* or *La Parisienne* or an underplayed affair of male loyalty in a story by Ernest Hemingway, to both of which it has some similarity. It is as if having the three men on the lonely island has enabled the highly sophisticated Sophocles to get further away from the framework of the old myths on which he has to depend and whose barbarities, anomalies and absurdities, tactfully and realistically though he handles them, seem sometimes almost as much out of place as they would in a dialogue by Plato. The people of the *Philoctetes* seem to us more familiar than they do in most of the other Greek tragedies;¹ and they take on for us a more intimate meaning. Philoctetes remains in our mind, and his incurable wound and his invincible bow recur to us with a special insistence. But what is it they mean? How is it possible for Sophocles to make us accept them so naturally? Why do we enter with scarcely a stumble into the situation of people who are preoccupied with a snake bite that lasts forever and a weapon that cannot fail?

Let us first take account of the peculiar twist which Sophocles seems to have given the legend, as it had come to him from the old epics and the dramatists who had used it before him.

The main outline of the story ran as follows: The demigod Heracles had been given by Apollo a bow that never missed its mark. When, poisoned by Deianeira's robe, he had had himself burned on Mount Oeta, he had persuaded Philoctetes to light the pyre and had rewarded him by bequeathing to him this weapon. Philoctetes had thus been formidably equipped when he had later set forth against Troy with Agamemnon and Menelaus. But on the way they had to stop off at the tiny island of Chrysè to sacrifice to the local deity. Philoctetes approached the shrine first, and he was bitten in the foot by a snake. The infection became peculiarly virulent; and the groans of Philoctetes made it impossible to perform the sacrifice, which would be spoiled by ill-omened sounds; the bite began to suppurate with so horrible a smell that his companions could not bear to have him near them. They removed

him to Lemnos, a neighboring island which was much larger than Chrysè and inhabited, and sailed away to Troy without him.

Philoctetes remained there ten years. The mysterious wound never healed. In the meantime, the Greeks, hard put to it at Troy after the deaths of Achilles and Ajax and baffled by the confession of their soothsayer that he was unable to advise them further, had kidnaped the soothsayer of the Trojans and had forced him to reveal to them that they could never win till they had sent for Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, and given him his father's armor, and till they had brought Philoctetes and his bow.

Both these things were done. Philoctetes was healed at Troy by the son of the physician Asclepius; and he fought Paris in single combat and killed him. Philoctetes and Neoptolemus became the heroes of the taking of Troy.

Both Aeschylus and Euripides wrote plays on this subject long before Sophocles did; and we know something about them from a comparison of the treatments by the three different dramatists which was written by Dion Chrysostom, a rhetorician of the first century A.D. Both these versions would seem to have been mainly concerned with the relation of Philoctetes to the success of the Greek campaign. All three of the plays dealt with the same episode: the visit of Odysseus to Lemnos for the purpose of getting the bow; and all represented Odysseus as particularly hateful to Philoctetes (because Odysseus had been one of those responsible for abandoning him on the island), and obliged to resort to cunning. But the emphasis of Sophocles' treatment appears fundamentally to have differed from that of the other two. In the drama of Aeschylus, we are told, Odysseus was not recognized by Philoctetes, and he seems simply to have stolen the bow. In Euripides, he was disguised by Athena in the likeness of another person, and he pretended that he had been wronged by the Greeks as Philoctetes had been. He had to compete with a delegation of Trojans, who had been sent to get the bow for their side and who arrived at the same time as he; and we do not know precisely what happened. But Dion Chrysostom regarded the play as "a masterpiece of declamation" and "a model of ingenious debate," and Jebb thinks it probable that Odysseus won the contest by an appeal to

Philoctetes' patriotism. Since Odysseus was pretending to have been wronged by the Greeks, he could point to his own behavior in suppressing his personal resentments in the interests of saving Greek honor. The moral theme thus established by Aeschylus and Euripides both would have been simply, like the theme of the wrath of Achilles, the conflict between the passions of an individual—in this case, an individual suffering from a genuine wrong—and the demands of duty to a common cause.

This conflict appears also in Sophocles; but it takes on a peculiar aspect. Sophocles, in the plays of his we have, shows himself particularly successful with people whose natures have been poisoned by narrow fanatical hatreds. Even allowing for the tendency of Greek heroes, in legend and history both, to fly into rather childish rages, we still feel on Sophocles' part some sort of special point of view, some sort of special sympathy, for these cases. Such people—Electra and the embittered old Oedipus—suffer as much as they hate: it is because they suffer they hate. They horrify, but they waken pity. Philoctetes is such another: a man obsessed by a grievance, which in his case he is to be kept from forgetting by an agonizing physical ailment; and for Sophocles his pain and hatred have a dignity and an interest. Just as it is by no means plain to Sophocles that in the affair of Antigone *versus* Cleon it is the official point of view of Cleon, representing the interests of his victorious faction, which should have the last word against Antigone, infuriated by a personal wrong; so it is by no means plain to him that the morality of Odysseus, who is lying and stealing for the fatherland, necessarily deserves to prevail over the animus of the stricken Philoctetes.

The contribution of Sophocles to the story is a third person who will sympathize with Philoctetes. This new character is Neoptolemus, the young son of Achilles, who, along with Philoctetes, is indispensable to the victory of the Greeks and who has just been summoned to Troy. Odysseus is made to bring him to Lemnos for the purpose of deceiving Philoctetes and shanghaiing him aboard the ship.

The play opens with a scene between Odysseus and the boy, in which the former explains the purpose of their trip. Odysseus will

remain in hiding in order not to be recognized by Philoctetes, and Neoptolemus will go up to the cave in which Philoctetes lives and win his confidence by pretending that the Greeks have robbed him of his father's armor, so that he, too, has a grievance against them. The youth in his innocence and candor objects when he is told what his role is to be, but Odysseus persuades him by reminding him that they can only take Troy through his obedience and that once they have taken Troy, he will be glorified for his bravery and wisdom. "As soon as we have won," Odysseus assures him, "we shall conduct ourselves with perfect honesty. But for one short day of dishonesty, allow me to direct you what to do—and then forever after you will be known as the most righteous of men." The line of argument adopted by Odysseus is one with which the politics of our time have made us very familiar. "Isn't it base, then, to tell falsehoods?" Neoptolemus asks. "Not," Odysseus replies, "when a falsehood will bring our salvation."

Neoptolemus goes to talk to Philoctetes. He finds him in the wretched cave—described by Sophocles with characteristic realism: the bed of leaves, the crude wooden bowl, the filthy bandages drying in the sun—where he has been living in rags for ten years, limping out from time to time to shoot wild birds or to get himself wood and water. The boy hears the harrowing story of Philoctetes' desertion by the Greeks and listens to his indignation. The ruined captain begs Neoptolemus to take him back to his native land, and the young man pretends to consent. (Here and elsewhere I am telescoping the scenes and simplifying a more complex development.) But just as they are leaving for the ship, the ulcer on Philoctetes' foot sets up an ominous throbbing in preparation for one of its periodical burstings: "She returns from time to time," says the invalid, "as if she were sated with her wanderings." In a moment he is stretched on the ground, writhing in abject anguish and begging the young man to cut off his foot. He gives Neoptolemus the bow, telling him to take care of it till the seizure is over. A second spasm, worse than the first, reduces him to imploring the boy to throw him into the crater of the Lemnian volcano: so he himself, he says, had lit the fire which consumed the tormented Heracles and had got in return these arms, which he

is now handing on to Neoptolemus. The pain abates a little; "It comes and goes," says Philoctetes; and he entreats the young man not to leave him. "Don't worry about that. We'll stay." "I shan't even make you swear it, my son." "It would not be right to leave you" (it would not be right, of course, even from the Greeks' point of view). They shake hands on it. A third paroxysm twists the cripple; now he asks Neoptolemus to carry him to the cave, but shrinks from his grasp and struggles. At last the abscess bursts, the dark blood begins to flow. Philoctetes, faint and sweating, falls asleep.

The sailors who have come with Neoptolemus urge him to make off with the bow. "No," the young man replies. "He cannot hear us; but I am sure that it will not be enough for us to recapture the bow without him. It is he who is to have the glory—it was he the god told us to bring."

While they are arguing, Philoctetes awakes and thanks the young man with emotion: "Agamemnon and Menelaus were not so patient and loyal." But now they must get him to the ship, and the boy will have to see him undeceived and endure his bitter reproaches. "The men will carry you down," says Neoptolemus. "Don't trouble them: just help me up," Philoctetes replies. "It would be too disagreeable for them to take me all the way to the ship." The smell of the suppuration has been sickening. The young man begins to hesitate. The other sees that he is in doubt about something: "You're not so overcome with disgust at my disease that you don't think you can have me on the ship with you?"—

οὐ δὴ σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος
ἔπεισεν ὥστε μή μ' ἄγειν ναύτην ἔτι;

The answer is one of the most effective of those swift and brief speeches of Sophocles which for the first time make a situation explicit (my attempts to render this dialogue colloquially do no justice to the feeling and point of the verse):

ἅπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν
δταν λιπὼν τις δρᾷ τὰ μὴ προοεικότα.

- "Everything becomes disgusting when you are false to your own nature and behave in an unbecoming way."

He confesses his real intentions; and a painful scene occurs. Philoctetes denounces the boy in terms that would be appropriate for Odysseus; he sees himself robbed of his bow and left to starve on the island. The young man is deeply worried: "Why did I ever leave Scyros?" he asks himself. "Comrades, what shall I do?"

At this moment, Odysseus, who has been listening, pops out from his hiding place. With a lash of abuse at Neoptolemus, he orders him to hand over the arms. The young man's spirit flares up: when Odysseus invokes the will of Zeus, he tells him that he is degrading the gods by lending them his own lies. Philoctetes turns on Odysseus with an invective which cannot fail to impress the generous Neoptolemus: Why have they come for him now? he demands. Is he not still just as ill-omened and loathsome as he had been when they made him an outcast? They have only come back to get him because the gods have told them they must.

The young man now defies his mentor and takes his stand with Philoctetes. Odysseus threatens him: if he persists, he will have the whole Greek army against him, and they will see to it that he is punished for his treason. Neoptolemus declares his intention of taking Philoctetes home; he gives him back his bow. Odysseus tries to intervene; but Philoctetes has got the bow and aims an arrow at him. Neoptolemus seizes his hand and restrains him. Odysseus, always prudent, beats a quiet retreat.

Now the boy tries to persuade the angry man that he should, nevertheless, rescue the Greeks. "I have proved my good faith," says Neoptolemus; "you know that I am not going to coerce you. Why be so wrongheaded? When the gods afflict us, we are obliged to bear our misfortunes; but must people pity a man who suffers through his own choice? The snake that bit you was an agent of the gods, it was the guardian of the goddess' shrine, and I swear to you by Zeus that the sons of Asclepius will cure you if you let us take you to Troy." Philoctetes is incredulous, refuses. "Since you gave me your word," he says, "take me home again." "The Greeks will attack me and ruin me." "I'll defend you." "How can you?" "With my bow." Neoptolemus is forced to consent.

But now Heracles suddenly appears from the skies and declares to Philoctetes that what the young man says is true, and that it is right for him to go to Troy. He and the son of Achilles shall stand together like lions and shall gloriously carry the day.—The *deus ex machina* here may of course figure a change of heart which has taken place in Philoctetes as the result of his having found a man who recognizes the wrong that has been done him and who is willing to champion his cause in defiance of all the Greek forces. His patron, the chivalrous Heracles, who had himself performed so many generous exploits, asserts his influence over his heir. The long hatred is finally exorcised.

In a fine lyric utterance which ends the play, Philoctetes says farewell to the cavern, where he has lain through so many nights listening to the deep-voiced waves as they crashed against the headland, and wetted by the rain and the spray blown in by the winter gales. A favorable wind has sprung up; and he sails away to Troy.

It is possible to guess at several motivations behind the writing of the *Philoctetes*. The play was produced in 409, when—if the tradition of his longevity be true—Sophocles would have been eighty-seven; and it is supposed to have been followed by the *Oedipus Coloneus*, which is assigned to 405 or 406. The latter deals directly with old age; but it would appear that the *Philoctetes* anticipates this theme in another form. Philoctetes, like the outlawed Oedipus, is impoverished, humbled, abandoned by his people, exacerbated by hardship and chagrin. He is accursed: Philoctetes' ulcer is an equivalent for the abhorrent sins of Oedipus, parricide and incest together, which have made of the ruler a pariah. And yet somehow both are sacred persons who have acquired superhuman powers, and who are destined to be purged of their guilt. One passage from the earlier play is even strikingly repeated in the later. The conception of the wave-beaten promontory and the sick man lying in his cave assailed by the wind and rain turns up in the *Oedipus Coloneus* (Colonus was Sophocles' native deme) with a figurative moral value. So the ills of old age assail Oedipus. Here are the lines, in A. E. Housman's translation:

This man, as me, even so,
Have the evil days overtaken;
And like as a cape sea-shaken
With tempest at earth's last verges
And shock of all winds that blow,
His head the seas of woe,
The thunders of awful surges
Ruining overflow:
Blown from the fall of even,
Blown from the dayspring forth,
Blown from the noon in heaven,
Blown from night and the North.

But Oedipus has endured as Philoctetes has endured in the teeth of all the cold and the darkness, the screaming winds and the bellying breakers: the blind old man is here in his own person the headland that stands against the storm.

We may remember a widely current story about the creator of these two figures. It is said that one of Sophocles' sons brought him into court in his advanced old age on the complaint that he was no longer competent to manage his property. The old poet is supposed to have recited a passage from the play which he had been writing: the chorus in praise of Colonus, with its clear song of nightingales, its wine-dark ivy, its crocus glowing golden and its narcissus moist with dew, where the stainless stream of the Cephissus wanders through the broad-swelling plain and where the gray-leaved olive grows of itself beneath the gaze of the gray-eyed Athena—shining Colonus, breeder of horses and of oarsmen whom the Nereids lead. The scene had been represented on the stage and Sophocles had been made to declare: "If I am Sophocles, I am not mentally incapable; if I am mentally incapable, I am not Sophocles." In any case, the story was that the tribunal, composed of his fellow clansmen, applauded and acquitted the poet and censored the litigating son. The ruined and humiliated heroes of Sophocles' later plays are still persons of mysterious virtue, whom their fellows are forced to respect.

There is also a possibility, even a strong probability, that Sophocles intended Philoctetes to be identified with Alcibiades. This brilliant and unique individual, one of the great military leaders

of the Athenians, had been accused by political opponents of damaging the sacred statues of Hermes and burlesquing the Eleusinian mysteries, and had been summoned to stand trial at Athens while he was away on his campaign against Sicily. He had at once gone over to the Spartans, commencing that insolent career of shifting allegiances which ended with his returning to the Athenian side. At a moment of extreme danger, he had taken over a part of the Athenian fleet and had defeated the Spartans in two sensational battles in 411 and 410, thus sweeping them out of the eastern Aegean and enabling the Athenians to dominate the Hellespont. The *Philoctetes* was produced in 409, when the Athenians already wanted him back and were ready to cancel the charges against him and to restore him to citizenship. Alcibiades was a startling example of a bad character who was indispensable. Plutarch says that Aristophanes well describes the Athenian feeling about Alcibiades when he writes: "They miss him and hate him and long to have him back." And the malady of Philoctetes may have figured his moral defects: the unruly and unscrupulous nature which, even though he seems to have been innocent of the charges brought against him, had given them a certain plausibility. It must have looked to the Athenians, too, after the victories of Abydos and Cyzicus, as if he possessed an invincible bow. Plutarch says that the men who had served under him at the taking of Cyzicus did actually come to regard themselves as undefeatable and refused to share quarters with other soldiers who had fought in less successful engagements.

Yet behind both the picture of old age and the line in regard to Alcibiades, one feels in the *Philoctetes* a more general and fundamental idea: the conception of superior strength as inseparable from disability.

For the superiority of Philoctetes does not reside merely in the enchanted bow. When Lessing replied to Winckelmann, who had referred to Sophocles' cripple as if he were an example of the conventional idea of impassive classical fortitude, he pointed out that, far from exemplifying impassivity, Philoctetes becomes completely demoralized every time he has one of his seizures, and

yet that this only heightens our admiration for the pride which prevents him from escaping at the expense of helping those who have deserted him. "We despise," say the objectors, "any man from whom bodily pain extorts a shriek. Ay, but not always; not for the first time, nor if we see that the sufferer strains every nerve to stifle the expression of his pain; not if we know him otherwise to be a man of firmness; still less if we witness evidences of his firmness in the very midst of his sufferings, and observe that, although pain may have extorted a shriek, it has extorted nothing else from him, but that on the contrary he submits to the prolongation of his pain rather than renounce one iota of his resolutions, even where such a concession would promise him the termination of his misery."

For André Gide, in his *Philoctète*, the obstinacy of the invalid hermit takes on a character almost mystical. By persisting in his bleak and lonely life, the Philoctetes of Gide wins the love of a more childlike Neoptolemus and even compels the respect of a less hard-boiled Odysseus. He is practicing a kind of virtue superior not only to the virtue of the latter, with his code of obedience to the demands of the group, but also to that of the former, who forgets his patriotic obligations for those of a personal attachment. There is something above the gods, says the Philoctetes of Gide; and it is virtue to devote oneself to this. But what is it? asks Neoptolemus. I do not know, he answers; oneself! The misfortune of his exile on the island has enabled him to perfect himself: "I have learned to express myself better," he tells them, "now that I am no longer with men. Between hunting and sleeping, I occupy myself with thinking. My ideas, since I have been alone so that nothing, not even suffering, disturbs them, have taken a subtle course which sometimes I can hardly follow. I have come to know more of the secrets of life than my masters had ever revealed to me. And I took to telling the story of my sufferings, and if the phrase was very beautiful, I was by so much consoled; I even sometimes forgot my sadness by uttering it. I came to understand that words inevitably become more beautiful from the moment they are no longer put together in response to the demands of others. . . ." The Philoctetes of Gide is, in fact, a literary man: at once a

moralist and an artist, whose genius becomes purer and deeper in ratio to his isolation and outlawry. In the end, he lets the intruders steal the bow after satisfying himself that Neoptolemus can handle it, and subsides into a blissful tranquillity, much relieved that there is no longer any reason for people to seek him out.

With Gide we come close to a further implication, which even Gide does not fully develop but which must occur to the modern reader: the idea that genius and disease, like strength and mutilation, may be inextricably bound up together. It is significant that the only two writers of our time who have especially interested themselves in *Philoctetes*—André Gide and John Jay Chapman—should both be persons who have not only, like the hero of the play, stood at an angle to the morality of society and defended their position with stubbornness, but who have suffered from psychological disorders which have made them, in Gide's case, ill-regarded by his fellows; in Chapman's case, excessively difficult. Nor is it perhaps accidental that Charles Lamb, with his experience of his sister's insanity, should in his essay on *The Convalescent* choose the figure of *Philoctetes* as a symbol for his own "nervous fever."

And we must even, I believe, grant Sophocles some special insight into morbid psychology. The tragic themes of all three of the great dramatists—the madnesses, the murders and the incests—may seem to us sufficiently morbid. The hero with an incurable wound was even a stock subject of myth not confined to the *Philoctetes* legend: there was also the story of *Telephus*, also wounded and also indispensable, about which both Sophocles and Euripides wrote plays. But there is a difference between the treatment that Sophocles gives to these conventional epic subjects and the treatments of the other writers. Aeschylus is more religious and philosophical; Euripides more romantic and sentimental. Sophocles by comparison is clinical. Arthur Platt, who had a special interest in the scientific aspect of the classics, says that Sophocles was scrupulously up-to-date in the physical science of his time. He was himself closely associated by tradition with the cult of the healer *Asclepius*, whose son is to cure *Philoctetes*: Lucian had read a poem which he had dedicated to the doctor-god; and Plu-

tarch reports that Asclepius was supposed to have visited his hearth. He is said also to have been actually a priest of another of the medical cults. Platt speaks particularly of his medical knowledge—which is illustrated by the naturalism and precision of his description of Philoctetes' infected bite.

But there is also in Sophocles a cool observation of the behavior of psychological derangements. The madness of Ajax is a genuine madness, from which he recovers to be horrified at the realization of what he has done. And it was not without good reason that Freud laid Sophocles under contribution for the naming of the Oedipus complex—since Sophocles had not only dramatized the myth that dwelt with the violation of the incest taboo, but had exhibited the suppressed impulse behind it in the speech in which he makes Jocasta attempt to reassure Oedipus by reminding him that it was not uncommon for men to dream about sleeping with their mothers—"and he who thinks nothing of this gets through his life most easily." Those who do not get through life so easily are presented by Sophocles with a very firm grasp on the springs of their abnormal conduct. Electra is what we should call nowadays schizophrenic: the woman who weeps over the urn which is supposed to contain her brother's ashes is not "integrated," as we say, with the fury who prepares her mother's murder. And certainly the fanaticism of Antigone—"fixated," like Electra, on her brother—is intended to be abnormal, too. The banishment by Jebb from Sophocles' text of the passage in which Antigone explains the unique importance of a brother, and his juggling of the dialogue in the scene in which she betrays her indifference to the feelings of the man she is supposed to marry, are certainly among the curiosities of Victorian scholarship—though he was taking his cue from the complaint of Goethe that Antigone had been shown by Sophocles as acting from trivial motives and Goethe's hope that her speech about her brother might someday be shown to be spurious. Aristotle had cited this speech of Antigone's as an outstanding example of the principle that if anything peculiar occurs in a play the cause must be shown by the dramatist. It was admitted by Jebb that his rewriting of these passages had no real textual justification; and in one case he violates glaringly the con-

vention of the one-line dialogue. To accept his emendation would involve the assumption that Aristotle did not know what the original text had been and was incapable of criticizing the corrupted version. No: Antigone forgets her fiancé and kills herself for her brother. Her timid sister (like Electra's timid sister) represents the normal feminine point of view. Antigone's point of view is peculiar, as Aristotle says. (The real motivation of the *Antigone* has been retraced with unmistakable accuracy by Professor Walter R. Agard in *Classical Philology* of July, 1937.)

These insane or obsessed people of Sophocles all display a perverse kind of nobility. I have spoken of the authority of expiation which emanates from the blasted Oedipus. Even the virulence of Electra's revenge conditions the intensity of her tenderness for Orestes. And so the maniacal fury which makes Ajax run amuck, the frenzy of Heracles in the Nessus robe, terribly though they transform their victims, can never destroy their virtue of heroes. The poor disgraced Ajax will receive his due of honor after his suicide and will come to stand higher in our sympathies than Menelaus and Agamemnon, those obtuse and brutal captains, who here as in the *Philoctetes* are obviously no favorites of Sophocles'. Heracles in his final moments bids his spirit curb his lips with steel to keep him from crying out, and carry him through his self-destructive duty as a thing that is to be desired.

Some of these maladies are physical in origin, others are psychological; but they link themselves with one another. The case of Ajax connects psychological disorder as we get it in Electra, for example, with the access of pain and rage that causes Heracles to kill the herald Lichas; the case of Heracles connects a poisoning that produces a murderous fury with an infection that, though it distorts the personality, does not actually render the victim demented: the wound of Philoctetes, whose agony comes in spasms like that of Heracles. All these cases seem intimately related.

It has been the misfortune of Sophocles to figure in academic tradition as the model of those qualities of coolness and restraint which that tradition regards as classical. Those who have never read him—remembering the familiar statue—are likely to conceive something hollow and marmoreal. Actually, as C. M. Bowra

says, Sophocles is "passionate and profound." Almost everything that we are told about him by the tradition of the ancient world suggests equanimity and amiability and the enjoyment of unusual good fortune. But there is one important exception: the anecdote in Plato's *Republic* in which Sophocles is represented as saying that the release from amorous desire which had come to him in his old age had been like a liberation from an insane and cruel master. He *has* balance and logic, of course: those qualities that the classicists admire; but these qualities only count because they master so much savagery and madness. Somewhere even in the fortunate Sophocles there had been a sick and raving Philoctetes.

And now let us go back to the *Philoctetes* as a parable of human character. I should interpret the fable as follows. The victim of a malodorous disease which renders him abhorrent to society and periodically degrades him and makes him helpless is also the master of a superhuman art which everybody has to respect and which the normal man finds he needs. A practical man like Odysseus, at the same time coarse-grained and clever, imagines that he can somehow get the bow without having Philoctetes on his hands or that he can kidnap Philoctetes the bowman without regard for Philoctetes the invalid. But the young son of Achilles knows better. It is at the moment when his sympathy for Philoctetes would naturally inhibit his cheating him—so the supernatural influences in Sophocles are often made with infinite delicacy to shade into subjective motivations—it is at this moment of his natural shrinking that it becomes clear to him that the words of the seer had meant that the bow would be useless without Philoctetes himself. It is in the nature of things—of this world where the divine and the human fuse—that they cannot have the irresistible weapon without its loathsome owner, who upsets the processes of normal life by his curses and his cries, and who in any case refuses to work for men who have exiled him from their fellowship.

It is quite right that Philoctetes should refuse to come to Troy. Yet it is also decreed that he shall be cured when he shall have been able to forget his grievance and to devote his divine gifts to the service of his own people. It is right that he should refuse to submit to the purposes of Odysseus, whose only idea is to exploit

him. How then is the gulf to be got over between the ineffective plight of the bowman and his proper use of his bow, between his ignominy and his destined glory? Only by the intervention of one who is guileless enough and human enough to treat him, not as a monster, nor yet as a mere magical property which is wanted for accomplishing some end, but simply as another man, whose sufferings elicit his sympathy and whose courage and pride he admires. When this human relation has been realized, it seems at first that it is to have the consequence of frustrating the purpose of the expedition and ruining the Greek campaign. Instead of winning over the outlaw, Neoptolemus has outlawed himself as well, at a time when both the boy and the cripple are desperately needed by the Greeks. Yet in taking the risk to his cause which is involved in the recognition of his common humanity with the sick man, in refusing to break his word, he dissolves Philoctetes' stubbornness, and thus cures him and sets him free, and saves the campaign as well.

¹ "Apropos of the rare occasions when the ancients seem just like us, it always has seemed to me that a wonderful example was the repentance of the lad in the [*Philoctetes*?] play of Sophocles over his deceit, and the restoration of the bow."—Mr. Justice Holmes to Sir Frederick Pollock, October 2, 1921.

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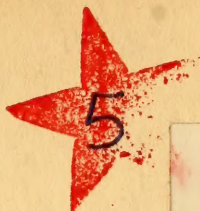
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